

# MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION

## COVID-19: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MARCH 22, 2021

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1. **[MODIFIED] What measures have been put in place for preschool and elementary school?**

**Preschoolers are not required to wear a procedural mask or face covering, regardless of the zone they are in.**

**In red zones**

Wearing a pediatric procedural mask is mandatory at all times for all elementary students, including in classrooms.

**In orange zones**

Wearing a face covering is mandatory for elementary students in common areas and when circulating, as well as when using school transportation. For students in Elementary 5 and 6 in orange zones, wearing a face covering will remain mandatory at all times. However, face coverings will be replaced by the pediatric procedural masks provided to students once these masks have arrived at public and private schools. Students are not required to wear face coverings or masks in the schoolyard or when circulating outdoors.

**In yellow zones**

Starting on March 26, students in Elementary Cycle Three must wear face coverings when circulating in common areas and when using school transportation. Face coverings will no longer be required for students in Cycles One and Two.

For further details, please refer to the following section: Wearing of face coverings and procedural masks.

2. **[MODIFIED] What measures have been put in place for educational services for general education in secondary school?**

**In red zones**

Students in Secondary III, IV and V will continue to attend according to an alternating schedule (present in class 50% of the time and distance education for the other 50%). Since January 18, 2021, secondary students have been required to wear procedural masks rather than face coverings. Procedural masks will be required at all times: in class, when circulating, in common areas, on the school grounds and on school transportation. Two procedural masks per day are provided to students by their educational institution. For further details, please refer to the following section: Wearing of face coverings and procedural masks.

**In orange zones**

The obligation to reduce the number of in-class hours of educational services for Secondary III, IV and V students by 50% no longer applies as of March 22, 2021, including in regions that will move to yellow zones. Therefore, these students can return to attending school in person on a full-time basis. It is still possible that, based on changes to the situation, the public health authorities may require a return to the alternating schedule for selected schools during a given period. Each school must remain ready to return to this schedule within a very short time. The guidelines that apply to the wearing of procedural masks remain in force and can be consulted in the section, Wearing of face coverings and procedural masks.

3. **[MODIFIED] What measures have been put in place for resuming adult general education and vocational training?**

Educational services are provided based on the locally established school calendars. This also applies to continuing education offered as a service to businesses. In red zones, distance education services remain the preferred method of providing educational services in vocational training centres or private institutions that provide vocational training. In orange and yellow zones, in-person classes are a possibility, but distance education can continue to be used.

As of March 26, in-person extracurricular activities and field trips are permitted, provided the relevant health measures are respected. Therefore, in orange zones, it will possible to organize these activities with 12 people outdoors and 8 people indoors, and in yellow zones, with 12 people in both cases. In red zones, these activities remain prohibited.

Additionally, in red zones, travel to and from vocational training and adult education centres providing night classes is permitted during the curfew.

In red and orange zones, wearing a procedural mask is required at all times in the centres and on the grounds. Procedural masks must also be worn when students are seated in class, even if they are 2 metres apart. Students and teachers must remain 2 metres apart at all times. If it is impossible to do so, students and staff must wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

If students are less than 2 metres apart, even with physical barriers, they are still required to wear procedural masks. Students in different classes must remain 2 metres apart. During meals, the procedural masks can be removed when students are seated and ready to eat.

The educational institution will provide two procedural masks per day to each student.

In yellow zones, starting on March 26, procedural masks may be replaced by face coverings, which can be removed when students are seated in class with 2 metres of distance between them.

4. **An additional \$10 million has been announced as support for adult general education and vocational training. How will these funds be used?**

These funds may be used to improve existing services or programs based on the local needs that have been expressed. For example, they could be used to implement various initiatives, such as:

- additional support for students affected by lockdown restrictions to foster their educational success, especially by adding resources and providing access to work spaces
- enhancement of personalized pedagogical support (tutoring, mentoring, resource teachers, etc.) particularly for programs that are being taught remotely
- training for teaching staff
- hiring temporary staff or adding hours to manage changes required by the educational institution (placement of interns, modifying schedules, logistics of using rooms, labs and workshops)
- support for organizing and implementing distance learning for staff and institutions that require it

5. **Are services related to educational success that are provided to students in private clinics allowed to continue, even after the curfew?**

To encourage educational success, services helping students (remedial education, speech therapy, educational guidance or other services) that are offered privately, whether in a clinic or a home office, are authorized and are considered to be an essential service. The health measures and distancing requirements must be respected. Documentation justifying travel after curfew may be provided to the people concerned.

6. **[MODIFIED] Are sports and recreational activities, including extracurricular activities, permitted?**

**A – Extracurricular activities and field trips**

Since March 15, both indoor and outdoor extracurricular activities (e.g. sports, cultural, scientific, recreational) as well as field trips to locations authorized under the current health measures are once again permitted for stable class groups, regardless of the zone in which the school is situated. These activities must be organized in compliance with the other health measures that apply to the relevant zone.

**B- Sports and recreational activities**

**Indoor activities**

**In red zones**

Only skating rinks and pools are open. Indoor activities that take place alone, in groups of two or with members of the same household are permitted. Competitions and spectators are not permitted.

Private courses given at pools or skating rinks to one person or to the residents of the same household are permitted. Each group (teacher/student) must keep a physical distance from everyone else.

Starting on March 26, all indoor facilities will be open for activities that take place alone, in groups of two or with members of the same household.

### **In orange zones**

Activities that take place alone, in groups of two or with members of the same household are permitted. Competitions and spectators are not permitted. Private courses given to one person or to the residents of the same household are permitted. Each group (teacher/student) must keep a physical distance from everyone else.

Starting on March 26, non-contact activities that take place within a stable class group or with a maximum of 8 students (within the same school, but students can come from different stable class groups) will be permitted.

### **In yellow zones**

Starting on March 26, non-contact activities that take place within a stable class group or with a maximum of 12 students (within the same school, but students can come from different stable class groups) will be permitted.

### **In red, orange and yellow zones**

Physical Education and Health classes and special pedagogical programs are permitted in all facilities (pools, skating rinks, gyms, soccer complexes, etc.).

### **Outdoor activities**

As of March 26, in red and orange zones, activities including classes are permitted, but are limited to 8 people in red zones, 12 people in orange zones, or a stable class group in addition to a staff member responsible for facilitation or supervision. Activities carried out by members of the same household are permitted, except when they take place as part of Physical Education and Health classes and special pedagogical programs in an educational context.

In yellow zones, activities with infrequent close contact of only a short duration are permitted. Situations that simulate competitions can take place during training. For example, timed swimming exercises can take place provided that the health guidelines in force are respected, or two climbers can race indoors while training, provided they stay at least 2 metres apart.

Various locations near educational institutions can be used for physical activities. As of March 15, 2021, getting to a nearby location can involve transport by bus, but must not provide opportunities for class groups to mix, which would make it harder to follow distancing rules. All activities must comply with the physical distancing rules and health guidelines in force.

#### **7. [NEW] Can school transportation be used for field trips?**

School transportation can be used for cultural field trips, provided the health measures are respected.

#### **8. Is it possible to lend out equipment for outdoor activities?**

As part of Physical Education and Health class, provided teachers ensure that students wash their hands before and after touching any equipment, it is possible to exempt winter sports equipment (e.g. cross-country skis, snowshoes, skates) from quarantine, with the exception of protective helmets, which must be disinfected between uses or quarantined for 24 hours.

#### **9. How should the guidelines for handling a mask or face covering be applied during Physical Education and Health classes?**

Students are permitted to remove their procedural masks or face coverings to participate in physical activities, provided that the 2-metre distance between students is respected. Compliance with the guidelines for safe handling of masks and face coverings may need to be adapted in some circumstances, such as during Physical Education and Health classes. It is therefore recommended that ways of respecting these guidelines be identified, based on local realities.

For example, students could disinfect their hands before entering the gym and then keep a distance of 2 metres from other students when removing their mask and storing it in a personal bag labelled with their name. It may then be necessary to supervise the students to ensure that they stay 2 metres apart as they move in an orderly fashion to an identified location to store the bag containing their mask and to disinfect their hands a second time, in accordance with best practices. The details of the process may vary based on local realities.

10. **Are members of school staff who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 or who have been vaccinated still required to wear personal protective equipment?**

School staff members who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 or who have been vaccinated must wear the recommended personal protective equipment and respect the hygiene and distancing rules as well as the health measures in force in their region.

## Recognizing 900 hours of attendance

11. **[NEW] Does the modification to the number of days in the *Basic school regulation*, meaning the addition of 3 pedagogical days, affect the number of hours recognized for funding purposes in the 2020-2021 school year?**

For the 2020-2021 school year, given the modifications to section 16 of the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*, the school calendar for students contains the equivalent of a maximum of 200 days, of which at least 177 must be dedicated to educational services instead of the 180 originally planned. Additionally, the school calendar for students with special needs and students living in economically disadvantaged areas, which is laid out in paragraphs 2 and 3 of section 12 of the *Basic school regulation*, includes the equivalent of a maximum of 200 half-days of school, of which at least 177 must be dedicated to educational services, unless the school service centre or school board has been declared exempt to the degree and under the conditions determined by the Minister.

Given that at least 180 days or half-days dedicated to educational services were planned on September 30, 2020, despite the fact that the students' school calendar may contain fewer days, the planned 180 days or half-days will be recognized for funding purposes for the 2020-2021 school year.

## Distance education

12. **[MODIFIED] Will digital devices be made available for students who need to continue with distance education?**

According to the organization of educational services for elementary and secondary school, school service centres and school boards have a responsibility to lend equipment to students who do not have access to an appropriate digital device and an Internet connection (based on network availability) at home in order to continue their schooling through distance education.

To assist school service centres and school boards in acquiring digital equipment and lending it to students, the Ministère has provided the network with a budget envelope for the 2020-2021 school year.

Due to the \$150M funding envelope, school service centres and school boards have been provided with all the material required to respond to student needs related to technology.

The Ministère has also created a reserve supply of digital equipment that school service centres and school boards can draw on in the event that their inventory and orders do not allow them to meet the needs of students immediately. This reserve, which was initially made up of 15 000 tablets and 15 000 laptops, saw the addition of 21 512 Chromebooks in November. As of March 16, 47 547 devices from the reserve had been distributed to the school service centres and school boards.

13. **Should the distribution of digital devices to students who do not have an approved device at home take place immediately, or is it only required in the context of distance education?**

The distribution of devices can take place immediately, provided that sufficient equipment remains at the school for the standard activities to continue. Should distribution take place only after the transition to distance learning, the material must be distributed within 24 hours in order to avoid any interruption to educational services.

14. **Can students who are returning from abroad and who will be required to quarantine still receive the minimum number of hours of educational services prescribed?**

Students returning from abroad are not subject to the minimum number of hours prescribed and, therefore, are not eligible to receive the minimum number of hours of distance education services.

15. **[NEW]** What are the isolation guidelines that apply to siblings and members of the same household as a person who is waiting for the result of a COVID test?

Everyone living at the same address (household contacts) as a person showing symptoms and who is waiting for a test result must self-isolate until the result is obtained. Once the result has been received, residents living at the same address must follow the public health directives that apply to their situation.

16. **[NEW]** What about parents who are present at the school, especially participants in the *Parents de la maternelle 4 ans* program or activities that are part of the *Passe-Partout* program?

In orange and yellow zones, all visits to classrooms, including by parents, must be carried out in such a fashion as to ensure that distancing measures can be respected between adults (2 metres) and between adults and children who are not in the same family (2 metres). The size of the classroom or facility must therefore permit these measures to be applied, meaning that the number of parents present in class must be limited as much as possible to ensure that physical distancing is possible at all times. It is also recommended to ensure that all rooms are well ventilated between each use. Parents, like all visitors, must wear procedural masks at school (in class, in common areas, when circulating, in the schoolyard, etc.). In red zones, parent-teacher conferences must take place virtually whenever possible.

## Wearing of face coverings and procedural masks

17. **[NEW]** What are the requirements for wearing face coverings in multi-level classes?

The rules must be the same for students in the same group. The health guidelines that apply to the higher level apply to everyone in the class.

18. **[MODIFIED]** In what circumstances are students required to wear a face covering and in what circumstances is a procedural mask required?

### In yellow zones

As of March 26, students in Elementary Cycle Three must wear a face covering when circulating within shared spaces as well as on school transportation. The wearing of face coverings is no longer required for students in Cycles One and Two.

As of March 26, students in secondary school must wear a face covering only when circulating within shared spaces as well as on school transportation.

### In orange zones

Wearing a face covering is mandatory for elementary students in common areas and when circulating, as well as on school transportation. Students in Elementary 5 and 6 in orange zones must continue to wear face coverings at all times. However, face coverings will be replaced by the procedural masks provided to students once these masks have arrived at public and private schools. These masks are not required to be worn when in the schoolyard or when circulating outside.

Students in secondary school must wear a procedural mask as soon as they arrive on school grounds. They must wear it at all times (in their classroom, when circulating within the building and on school transportation).

Preschool students are not required to wear a face covering or pediatric mask.

### In red zones

Wearing a pediatric procedural mask is mandatory at all times for elementary students, including while in class.

Since March 8, 2021, all students from Elementary 1 through 6 in the Montréal Metropolitan Community are required to wear pediatric procedural masks at all times while in class, while circulating and while on school transportation. For students in elementary school, this requirement does not apply while outside in the schoolyard.

The delivery of pediatric procedural masks to school service centres, school boards and private schools in Montréal has already taken place.

Preschool students are not required to wear a face covering or pediatric mask. As is already the case, students in secondary school must wear a procedural mask as soon as they arrive on school grounds.

They must wear it at all times (in their classroom, when circulating within the building, on school grounds and on school transportation).

At the preschool, elementary and secondary levels, 2 metres of physical distancing must be maintained at all times between students in different stable class groups at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels. However, no physical distancing is required between students in the same stable class group, regardless of level, during meals. Students can remove their face coverings or procedural masks once they are seated and ready to eat but must put them back on when their meal is finished.

Regardless of the zone, there must be 2 metres of distance between students when they remove their face coverings (or procedural masks) to participate in an activity that requires it (drama, dance, music, sports). Schools are responsible for distributing pediatric procedural masks and procedural masks for elementary and secondary students. The guidelines pertaining to the wearing of face coverings and masks also apply to daycare services.

19. **[MODIFIED] In what circumstances are students required to wear a face covering or procedural mask while attending school daycare?**

In red zones, educational daycare services are required to respect the principle of the stable class group. It is recommended that the creation of additional stable groups at the daycare, made up of students from different stable class groups, be kept to a minimum and that, whenever possible, a distance of 2 metres be maintained between these students.

The installation of physical barriers to separate students from different groups is encouraged. However, if this measure were to cause students to be isolated, these students could be allowed to form an additional stable group.

In orange zones, when these guidelines cannot be followed, the wearing of a face covering by students in Elementary Cycles One and Two should be encouraged. As a reminder, preschool students may wear a face covering but are not required to do so.

20. **[NEW] Can the parents of children who are newly required to wear procedural masks at all times, even while in class, request that their child be exempted from this obligation?**

It is not possible to require a doctor's note in this situation. Wearing a procedural mask at all times is required for all elementary students in red zones. Parents must be reminded of this obligation and of the established reasons for exemptions. It is recommended to encourage as much dialogue as possible with parents and to remind them that the obligation to wear a mask is an important and effective measure to limit the risks that the virus spreads, especially in a context where the presence of variants in the population is still a significant risk. This measure, among others, will allow students to continue attending class in person.

Therefore, when a parent states that their child cannot wear a mask for a medical reason, the child will continue attending school in person, without a mask, and cannot be removed from their class. Closer attention must therefore be paid to the application of basic hygiene measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, whenever possible: handwashing, physical distancing, respiratory hygiene.

Unrelated to the issue of mask wearing in class, any parent who does not wish their child to attend school for personal reasons will still be entitled to homeschool their child, as stated in the *Basic school regulation*.

21. **[MODIFIED] In schools and administrative centres, when are staff members required to wear a face mask and when are they required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE)?**

The protection of workers and the prevention of outbreaks are governed by the Hierarchy of Control Measures in the Workplace, developed by the Réseau de santé publique en santé au travail (RSPSAT) and the INSPQ, and adopted by the CNESST.

**Main points**

When 2 metres of distancing can be maintained most of the time (a cumulative total of 15 minutes of close contact is permitted), no PPE is required. Adjustments to scheduling and to the organization of work can help ensure that the 2-metre distancing rule is respected in many situations most of the time, especially in classes with older students. Physical barriers can be used in some workstations and rooms to ensure that the 2-metre / 15-minute rule is followed. This assessment must be made by the educational institutions.

## **Wearing procedural masks**

If the analysis of a work shift leads to the conclusion that PPE is required for workers (based on the above-mentioned Hierarchy of Control Measures), PPE must be prioritized because the occupational health and safety standards govern the wearing of face coverings (see Order 810-2020). If the analysis leads to the conclusion that no PPE is required based on the Hierarchy of Control Measures, workers must wear masks in common areas (except in the classroom or a private individual office).

### **Specific cases**

For classes with young children, an analysis must be carried out by the educational institution (employer and workers) to determine whether PPE must be provided. The public health authorities are of the opinion that PPE is required in the case of preschool classes.

For classes of students with specific needs (behavioural issues, need for ongoing assistance, etc.), PPE (procedural masks and eye protection) must be systematically supplied in sufficient quantities.

Special care must be taken in the case of workers who are immunosuppressed or have a chronic illness. Employers must ensure that the 2-metre distance is respected at all times and that physical barriers are installed to help meet this goal. If this is not possible, these employees should be reassigned to other tasks or to work from home. These workers will have the opportunity to exercise their right of refusal under the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*, if they deem it necessary. The CNESST will then evaluate situations on a case-by-case basis. (For more details, see the “labour relations” section.)

### **In red zones**

Please note that wearing a procedural mask is required for all school staff in indoor and outdoor common areas, in staff rooms and on school grounds.

22. **[MODIFIED] What should be done if the procedural masks provided by schools are too large for some students in secondary school? Is it possible to adjust them? Is it preferable to use a face covering?**

If the procedural mask provided to the student is too large, it can be adjusted by reducing the length of the elastics (by making another loop around the ears or by tying knots) so that the procedural mask securely covers the student’s nose and mouth.

23. **Will the Ministère provide masks with windows for students with hearing difficulties?**

The Ministère will provide masks with windows to school service centres, school boards, and to the Montreal Oral School for the Deaf and the École Oraliste de Québec in order to meet specific needs.

24. **[MODIFIED] Does a procedural mask have to be replaced each time it is temporarily removed? (e.g. to eat a snack, play the trumpet, during Physical Education and Health class).**

Procedural masks can be reused if they still appear clean. It is recommended that the mask be stored in a clean bag, while maintaining proper hand hygiene, touching only the elastics or ties of the mask, and replacing the mask when it is soiled, wet or damaged. It is best to have two separate bags on hand for each mask in order to ensure appropriate storage.

25. **Can secondary school students bring their own fabric masks (face coverings) to school?**

In secondary school, procedural masks, not face coverings, must be worn at all times.

26. **Can secondary school students wear their own procedural masks at school?**

If it is not possible to confirm that a procedural mask is certified, it is preferable that secondary school students wear the procedural mask that is provided by their school.

27. **Are schools required to create a reserve supply of additional procedural masks in order to meet student needs as they occur?**

It is possible and recommended for schools to create a reserve supply of procedural masks so that students can be provided with more than 2 masks per day, if necessary (to replace a soiled mask, dropped mask, etc.).

28. **[NEW] Who is not required to wear a mask or face covering?**

People in the following situations are not required to wear a mask or face covering and are not required to provide a doctor’s note:

- people whose health condition prevents them from wearing a mask or face covering:
  - people who are unable to put it on or take it off by themselves due to a physical disability
  - people with facial deformities
  - people who, due to a cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, an autism spectrum disorder, an addiction problem or a severe mental health problem, are unable to understand the requirement or for whom wearing a mask or face covering causes significant disorganization or distress
  - people who have a severe skin condition on the face or ears that is significantly aggravated by wearing a mask or face covering

Source: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/wearing-a-face-covering-in-public-settings-in-the-context-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

29. **[NEW]** In situations where vocational training centers are providing ongoing training to workers, such as in the construction industry, are participants required to wear procedural masks? Are the vocational training centres required to provide masks to these students?

Any person attending a vocational training center, either as a regular student or as workers participating in continuing education sessions must wear a procedural mask (not a face covering) at all times, whether they are indoors or on the grounds of the facility. (Source: Confinement in Québec | Québec government: quebec.ca).

Vocational training centres will provide two procedural masks per day to regular students, including students enrolled in a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), an Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS) or a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS). For workers who are participating in professional development, it is the responsibility of the employer to provide the masks required for the duration of the training.

30. **[NEW]** In the health sector, starting on February 11, 2021, respiratory equipment rated N95 or higher is required to be worn by all healthcare workers providing care in hot zones. Does this requirement also apply to teaching staff and interns in healthcare environments in hot zones?

Teaching staff as well as students who are in healthcare environments in hot zones are also required to wear respiratory equipment rated N95 or higher.

## Physical Education and Health

31. **[MODIFIED]** How many groups can use the gymnasium at the same time?

Several groups can use the gymnasium at the same time.

In orange and red zones, the groups must remain separate. The groups must not come into contact with one another and must remain 2 metres apart. To make it possible to maintain this 2-metre distance, it is recommended that the divider curtain be closed or that cones be used to mark the boundary between two groups. It is still not permitted to mix different class groups during a physical activity.

32. **[MODIFIED]** Is it possible to go to a park near the school for Physical Education and Health class?

Students can go with their teacher to parks near the school for Physical Education and Health class. All activities must comply with the physical distancing rules and health guidelines in force.

33. **[MODIFIED]** Can pools remain open for Physical Education and Health classes, with access to locker rooms permitted for students who are in the same stable class group only?

Schools and municipalities in yellow, orange and red zones can decide to allow pools and locker rooms to remain open. Physical Education and Health classes can therefore take place, provided that the health measures are respected, especially the disinfection of locker rooms, distancing between students in different groups, the wearing of face coverings or procedural masks in locker rooms and when moving around (in yellow zones, only for Elementary Cycle Three and secondary), and controlled entrances and exits to limit the number of people present at the same time (compliance with physical distancing and avoiding contact).

34. **[MODIFIED]** What standards must be put in place to allow exercise rooms in schools to be used during Physical Education and Health classes?

In yellow and orange zones, it is possible for schools to use exercise rooms, including access to cardio and weight training equipment. Equipment must be disinfected every time a class group uses it. However, equipment that is used by several students, even within the same class group, should be disinfected more frequently. Ventilation must allow for good air circulation. Appropriate functioning and maintenance of ventilation systems is essential, based on the regulatory requirements that apply to each type of institution. Jets of air must not be directed horizontally at individuals.

In red zones, this authorization will apply starting March 26, subject to the same conditions as in yellow and orange zones.

## Recesses

35. **[NEW]** What guidelines apply during recesses?

Recesses are still only permitted within the stable class groups. Therefore, the maximum of 12 people as permitted by the public health authorities for outdoor activities within regions located in orange zones (or 8 people for regions located in red zones) as of March 26, does not apply during recesses. Students must stay with their stable class group, and the guidelines related to distancing must be respected. Time must also be allocated for hygiene and the disinfection of materials used by students.

## Organization of meals

36. **[NEW]** How should the lunch period be organized in secondary schools starting on March 22, when all students are attending school full-time in person?

In red and orange zones, the measures that apply for meals are maintained. Lunch must be eaten in the classroom if possible. If meals are eaten in the cafeteria, stable class groups must remain together and there must be 2 metres of physical distancing between different stable class groups.

### In orange zones

Students in secondary school must wear a procedural mask as soon as they arrive on school grounds. They must wear it at all times (in their classroom, when circulating within the building and on school transportation). However, no physical distancing is required between students in the same stable class group, regardless of level, during meals. Students can remove their procedural masks once they are seated and ready to eat but must put them back on when their meal is finished.

### In yellow zones

As of March 26, students in secondary school must wear a face covering when circulating within shared spaces as well as on school transportation. However, no physical distancing is required between students in the same stable class group, regardless of level, during meals. Students can remove their face coverings once they are seated and ready to eat but must put them back on when their meal is finished.

## Laboratories and workshops

37. **[MODIFIED]** Are students allowed to do lab work in teams? If so, can they use the same materials?

Yes. If the students in the course are all members of the same stable class group, they can work in teams in the labs since physical distancing is not required between students in the same stable class group. However, if the group is made up of students from different stable class groups, a 2-metre physical distance between students must be maintained.

However, it is recommended that the number of students using the same materials be limited as much as possible. Moreover, any materials and equipment must be disinfected after having been used by a class group, whether by the students or staff (in compliance with the guidelines in force).

## Food aid

### 38. **Under what circumstances are schools required to provide food aid to students in their community?**

Once a class has been closed as a preventive measure and regardless of the length of the closure, schools are to provide food aid to students who were receiving it prior to the closure as well as to those who express a need. These actions are consistent with the elements set out in the emergency protocols created by educational institutions. Schools are encouraged to form partnerships with local and regional community organizations that provide food support, to allow this aid to be provided directly in students' communities. If educational institutions use the funds allocated in the budget rules, they are not permitted to transfer these funds to any community organizations or individuals.

### 39. **[MODIFIED] Is it possible to provide food aid in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

It is possible to continue to provide food aid regardless of the health measures in force. Moreover, it is essential to continue to provide this aid in the context of the pandemic, based on the increases in inequalities and needs that may affect 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 portion 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 (available in French only):

- <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/organisation/documentation/formulaires-publications/guide-covid-19-restauration-bars>
- <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-002618>

## Extracurricular activities and field trips

### 40. **[NEW] Can schools organize extracurricular activities and field trips?**

Since March 15, extracurricular activities (sports, cultural, scientific and recreational activities) as well as field trips to facilities authorized to operate under the health guidelines in force are once again permitted within stable class groups, regardless of the zone in which the school is located. These activities must respect the other health guidelines that apply.

Starting on March 26 in orange zones, extracurricular activities that do not involve contact are authorized if they take place in stable class groups or with a maximum of 12 students for outdoor activities or 8 students for indoor activities. (These activities must take place within the same school, but students can come from different stable class groups).

Regardless of the zone, the presence of spectators is still forbidden.

### 41. **[MODIFIED] Is it possible to use the funds allocated for field trips to cultural venues (Measure 15186) to organize cultural activities at school?**

Considering the evolution of the epidemiological situation and the health guidelines that schools and cultural organizations must abide by, the funds granted to school service centres, school boards and subsidized accredited private schools for the 2020-2021 school year under the measure for field trips to cultural venues may be used to take field trips in stable class groups to sites authorized in accordance with the current health guidelines or, on an exceptional basis, to offer cultural activities at school.

In concrete terms, this additional flexibility will allow schools to co-operate with cultural groups listed in the Répertoire culture-éducation in organizing live or virtual shows, activities, exhibitions or performances, provided the health guidelines are respected. Details about terms and conditions are provided in the excerpt from the amendment that was sent to members of the education network. The flexibility afforded by this exception will allow transmission of culture, which is an important part of the mission of Québec schools, to continue and student motivation to be maintained.

42. **Is it possible to have organizations, artists or writers visit the classroom or school?**

Yes. Visitors or stakeholders from the health and social services network and various community organizations (DPJ, dental hygienists, artists in the schools, guest speakers, etc.) will be required to wear a face covering or procedural mask at all times, except when they are seated to eat or drink or when they are seated in a room and a physical distance of 1.5 metres between individuals can be maintained (2 metres when in the presence of students).

Visitors are asked to consider that the arrival of new variants has led the government to implement additional preventive measures and to prefer procedural masks where possible. However, wearing face coverings is still permissible for parents.

## Infrastructure

43. **[MODIFIED] What is the Ministère doing to ensure air quality in schools?**

In order to ensure rigorous control of air quality in Québec schools, air quality tests are being conducted in all schools in the network to measure the level of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The level of CO<sub>2</sub> alone does not guarantee indoor air quality, but it is a good indicator of the intake of fresh air from outside the room. Following the first series of tests carried out in December 2020, more details about this operation were sent to school service centres and school boards on January 15. In that message, it was requested that rapid intervention take place when necessary, in compliance with the new guidelines. The school service centres and school boards were asked to apply all of the recommendations issued by the public health authorities in response to a report prepared by a group of scientific and technical experts, coordinated by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

To ensure indoor air quality in schools, the Ministère de l'Éducation has provided the school service centres and school boards with various documents: the *Document de référence sur la qualité de l'air dans les établissements scolaires*, the *Guide pour l'entretien de systèmes de ventilation en milieu scolaire – Responsabilités et bonnes pratiques* and the *Guide sur la Gestion de la prolifération des moisissures en milieu scolaire – Responsabilités et bonnes pratiques* (all available in French only).

The Ministère has acquired air exchangers to support the school service centres and school boards that have not succeeded in lowering the CO<sub>2</sub> levels in learning areas to an acceptable level despite the application of the basic measures described in the *Directive sur la ventilation des bâtiments scolaires*.

44. **[NEW] Can schools lend or rent out space, outside of class hours, for other activities, and can daycare services located within schools use classrooms after the end of classes?**

Yes, provided that the cleaning and disinfection measures are properly applied between each use of the space, including in common areas such as bathrooms or kitchens that are also used. It is also recommended to ensure that the room is well-ventilated between each use. The school must make sure that the individuals using the rooms respect the public health rules in place. Rented space can only be used for activities that are permitted under the current public health guidelines.

## Evaluation and ministerial exams

45. **[MODIFIED] Have the ministerial exams been cancelled?**

Yes. In general education in the youth sector, all ministerial exams for the 2020-2021 school year have been cancelled, including the exams for the January, June and August sessions. This applies to compulsory examinations and uniform examinations. As a result, the school mark will count for 100% of a student's final result. Info/Sanction 20-21-25 provides information on this topic.

46. **[MODIFIED] Will the cancellation of ministerial exams for 2020-2021 have an impact on advancement to a higher grade?**

No. The decision to allow students to advance to the next grade will be made by the school team in elementary school and Secondary Cycle One. In Secondary Cycle Two, advancement will be determined by successful completion of each subject. These decisions will depend on the marks in the report card, which are based on evaluations conducted by teachers.

47. **[MODIFIED]** Will the Ministère provide teachers with guidelines to help them determine whether a student is prepared to advance to the next grade?

It is the responsibility of the teacher to determine their students' final results, based on the learning completed as set out in the program of study. However, taking into account the context of the current public health crisis, the Ministère specified the learning to be prioritized in January 2021. Teachers must take these elements into account when teaching, without, of course, limiting themselves to the items on the list based on the learning context.

48. **[NEW]** Is evaluation solely based on the learning to be prioritized?

The learning to be prioritized is a tool to help with planning, as it indicates the learning to be addressed first in the context of the pandemic. Of course, teachers are invited to go further if the context permits it. When evaluating student work, teachers who are responsible for determining students' marks are able to do so based on the learning to be prioritized as well as other content covered based on their planning.

49. **Is the final result supposed to be based exclusively on the evaluation of the learning to be prioritized?**

Local evaluations must allow all of the learning that was covered by the teacher based on their planning to be evaluated

50. **[NEW]** Is the last term report card required to show a mark for each subject and each competency?

In line with the modification to the *Basic school regulation*, a mark is required for all subjects in the second term. For subjects with detailed marks (Language of instruction, Second language and Mathematics), all the competencies must be evaluated. For subjects with one subject mark (Physical Education and Health, Ethics and Religious Culture or Arts Education), a subject mark is provided but all of the competencies must be evaluated, as it is intended to reflect student work in the entire program.

51. **For the last term report card, is it possible to use the term "Not evaluated?"**

No, the report card must be complete.

52. **[MODIFIED]** Why are ministerial examinations in vocational training and adult general education still being held?

Ministerial examinations in vocational training and adult general education will still be held because there is no school mark or other possible means of evaluation. In vocational training, these are qualifying examinations and, in adult general education, these are the only examinations that allow adult learners to progress in their schooling.

53. **[NEW]** Has the weighting of terms been modified?

Yes. Order in Council 111-2021, published on February 10, 2021, reduced the weighting of the first term of the 2020-2021 school year to 35% and increased the second term weighting to 65%.

54. **[MODIFIED]** Has the Ministère provided instructions to award a minimum mark on the first report card?

The Ministère has not provided any instructions to this effect. It is the responsibility of the teacher to determine their students' final marks, based on the learning completed as set out in the program of study. However, taking into account the context of the current public health crisis, the Ministère specified the learning to be prioritized in January 2021. Teachers must take these elements into account when teaching, without, of course, limiting themselves to the items on the list based on the learning context.

55. **[NEW]** In vocational training, is it possible to conduct local evaluations remotely?

In-person evaluation is still the preferred evaluation method. Accounting for the context of the current public health emergency, conducting local evaluations is possible. The Ministère has produced a best practices guide in order to support training centres in administering this type of evaluation. However, remote evaluation is only possible when the nature of the competencies being evaluated permits it. It is not possible for practical competencies where the evaluation requires the use of specific equipment or a laboratory.

## 56. Can entrance exams be held in person?

Holding exam sessions is possible, but they must take place in accordance with the health guidelines in force, including:

- Physical distancing of 2 metres between individuals (students and staff).
- Wearing of face coverings for elementary students and procedural masks for secondary students.
- Access to common areas based on the public health guidelines that apply in the region.
- Students must bring their own materials and may not share them.
- Frequent compulsory handwashing.
- Cleaning of surfaces, equipment and bathrooms.

Note that when these exams are held, these rules may have changed based on the epidemiological situation.

# Strategy to provide academic assistance and support students' well-being

## 57. What is the goal of the tutoring service?

Tutors will encourage the success of students identified by the school team by providing help to those experiencing difficulties in some school subjects.

## 58. Can parents require that their child be enrolled in the tutoring services provided by the school?

Parents can contact the school about their concerns. However, it is the responsibility of the school team to identify the appropriate services.

## 59. **[MODIFIED]** Who qualifies to work as a tutor?

Each school service centre, school board or private school, as an employer, is responsible for hiring the necessary staff to provide tutoring services based on community needs. The people who can apply to become tutors are:

- Current school staff
  - Individuals who are interested must contact their administrator, school service centre, school board or private school to indicate their interest.
- College or university students in the field of education
  - Individuals who were interested were to use the Answer the Call! platform. (The application period ended on February 19). School service centres, school boards and private schools have received the applications via this platform and are now responsible for the rest of the hiring process, using their criteria based on the needs of the students who will access this service.
- Retired education staff
  - Individuals who are interested can contact their former employer or any other school service centre, school board or private school to indicate their interest.
  - Individuals who were interested could also indicate their interest using the Answer the Call! platform. (The application period ended on February 19).

## 60. **[MODIFIED]** What is the pay scale for individuals providing tutoring services?

- School staff who would like to offer their services:
  - 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.
  - Some examples:
    - A substitute teacher is entitled to the remuneration of a teacher hired by the lesson when providing tutoring services.
    - A part-time teacher is entitled to the remuneration 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 have provided (beyond their work contract)
  - Note that 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.
- College students: \$20 per hour
  - University students: \$23 per hour

61. **[MODIFIED] Can a retired teacher who would like to provide tutoring services receive the temporary remuneration as set out in Order in Council 964-2020?**

In order to be entitled to the financial incentive set out in this order, the retired teacher must meet various criteria: “any person holding a teaching licence who has retired from the education network since 1 July 2015 and who returns to work to provide preschool education or teach at the elementary or secondary level”.

Moreover, if this retired person is fully compensated for their day of work and volunteers, outside of that day, to provide tutoring services, that person will be entitled to the remuneration of a teacher hired by the lesson for that additional period.

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

62. **Why are the school service centres and school boards not remunerating the employees who volunteers using the rates that have already been established for homework help?**

Any employee who volunteers for tutoring (teaching staff, professional staff or support staff) in a school board or school service centre will be remunerated based on the rules set out in the working conditions that apply to them.

63. **Do the judicial records of tutors need to be reviewed?**

Yes, 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).

64. **[NEW] In order to provide tutoring services, do college and university students need to join a recognized union?**

No, the students will not be unionized. Note that 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.

65. **[NEW] Are school boards and school service centres required to provide technological tools (laptops, IT help) to student tutors who have been newly hired?**

As stated on the Answer the Call! platform, 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).

66. **[MODIFIED] Will digital devices be made available so that students can participate in remote tutoring?**

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

67. **Who is responsible for training newly hired tutors?**

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to ensure that the staff they hire are properly trained.

**68. Has the Ministère de l'Éducation set a student-tutor ratio?**

No. Schools will do so, taking into consideration the nature and extent of student needs, as well as the experience and availability of tutors.

**69. What is the budget provided to each school service centre, school board or private school, and how many tutors must be hired?**

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

**70. [MODIFIED] Is there a minimum period of time for which tutors need to be hired?**

No. The period of time must be determined during the hiring process, based on tutors' availability and needs identified in the school.

**71. [MODIFIED] Is in-person tutoring possible or is this service provided exclusively online?**

Priority must be given to offering tutoring services remotely, but schools may make exceptions, provided that the appropriate health measures are implemented. Therefore, as employers, the school boards and school service centers 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).

**72. Can students and tutors contact a student's homeroom teacher?**

Management of the tutoring program within a school is the responsibility of the school's administration. If necessary, tutors can communicate with the school team using the procedures established in each school.

**73. What support will be provided?**

Alloprof will take various steps to provide additional educational support to the school system, specifically by:

- offering Alloprof services on Sundays: teachers will now be available between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., in addition to the regular schedule
- hiring 100 additional tutors by recruiting education students
- developing a new collaborative space where questions relating to academic subjects can be asked 7 days a week, moderated by post-secondary students
- creating 150 short recaps of priority learning content in secondary school

Alloprof estimates that this will allow 75 000 additional hours of support to be provided.

Tutoring services from LEARN will be available for students in the English network.

**74. Can we use the tutoring measure (15021) to pay for any verifications that need to be carried out?**

No. Educational institutions are asked to use the funds allocated for tutoring as efficiently as possible to provide students with the maximum number of services.

**75. Can a teacher provide tutoring services to their own students or the students of a teaching colleague?**

Yes. Educational institutions are responsible for pairing up students and tutors based on the nature and extent of student needs as well as the experience and availability of tutors.

**76. [NEW] What is the role of the teacher in a situation where certain students can benefit from tutoring?**

A teacher or other practitioner in the school can identify the students who may benefit from these services and communicate with the school's administration.

Management of the tutoring program within a school is the responsibility of the school's administration.

# Psychosocial support

## 77. What type of psychosocial support will be implemented for students and staff, and what kind of funding will be provided?

In addition to the funds provided to Tel-jeunes to support young people, approximately \$15 million have been invested in support for students and staff in the school network. This demonstrates the value the Ministère places on promoting the well-being of students and staff in our schools.

This measure supports the implementation of initiatives aimed at building protective factors and fostering resilience in students. Teachers will be offered enhanced training and support in developing social and emotional competencies, which are important skills for facing the various challenges of the current context. By supporting staff, who have themselves been affected by the crisis, these actions will help school personnel to better model resilience for students.

This support for the well-being and psychosocial health of students and staff complements the joint announcement made by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and the Ministère de l'Éducation in October 2020 regarding funding for the hiring of psychosocial resource persons to be deployed in the schools in collaboration with the regional public health authorities.

Depending on their specific needs and realities, schools can also launch their own projects to promote good mental health and well-being among their students and staff.

## 78. When will these funds be made available?

These funds are available now. Schools have until June 30, 2021, to use them, and can start planning immediately how to implement the initiatives covered by the measures.

## 79. Are these funds specifically allocated and protected?

Specifically allocated and protected funds apply to school service centres and school boards. Private schools are not affected.

In the public system, the funds associated with Measure 15022 – *Bien-être à l'école* are protected, meaning that they cannot be transferred to other measures and must be used only for the elements targeted by this measure. Note that funding under Measure 15021 – *Soutien additionnel à la consolidation des apprentissages et à l'engagement scolaire des élèves en contexte COVID pour le tutorat* is dedicated, meaning that it can be transferred to other measures in the same group.

## 80. [MODIFIED] When will these services be available to students?

- End of January 2021 (shortly after the announcement):
  - Creating a service for contacting young people who have been identified by their schools. Students who have been referred by their teachers and whose parents have consented will be contacted by a Tel-jeunes staff member to initiate the personalized support process.
  - Rapid contact between students in distress and Tel-jeunes by text message or email sent by the organization.
  - Contacts made by the existing staff at Tel-jeunes, whose hours will be increased.
  - Using the bank of candidates created using the Answer the Call! platform, schools and partner organizations have already started recruiting new staff, verifying their judicial records and having them trained.
- Starting in March 2021:
  - Creation and release of short videos and content (mental health, prevention and other themes) promoted in schools and online.
  - Messaging for and with young people using a chatbot.
  - Communication channel: a messaging service staffed by students (\*The bank of candidates from the *Answer the Call!* platform will be used for this.).
- Beginning of April 2021:
  - Platform for exchanges between young people (the interactive forum will be hosted and moderated by Tel-jeune staff [questions and answers, personal accounts, content]).

- Summer 2021: Start of the integration of solutions developed for the current operations of Tel-jeunes.
- For back-to-school 2021: Mobile application integrating all of these features.

**81. Are Tel-jeunes services also available to people who do not have cellphones?**

Yes. Some services are available on the Internet and students can also make a request by email. A personalized response will be sent to these students.

**82. Can our complementary educational services staff work on meeting psychosocial needs?**

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to organize services to meet psychosocial needs identified in their environment. Complementary services staff can certainly contribute. The enhanced services offered by Tel-jeunes are intended to complement the services already offered by the school network.

## Parental consent

**83. Are parents required to provide consent so that their child can receive tutoring services?**

Yes. Before a student in need of tutoring can be provided with these services, the holder of parental authority must provide written consent.

## Remuneration

**84. Can staff be permitted to work overtime and be compensated for it? What are the conditions that apply?**

Yes. Staff can be permitted to exceed their normal workload in accordance with the conditions stated in the relevant collective agreements.

**Teachers**

If, for specific reasons, the school service centre or the school board assigns a teacher a heavier workload with a longer duration than planned, the teacher is entitled to financial compensation equal to 1/1000 of their annual salary.

**Professionals**

Professionals who work overtime obtain compensatory leave or remuneration paid out for the number of hours worked, at the standard rate.

**Support staff**

The collective agreements that cover support staff provide for the possibility of working overtime.

**85. [MODIFIED] What remuneration applies in the case of staff who cannot or who refuse to work in schools?**

Justified situations beyond the employee’s control	
Situation	Remuneration
Part of a group recognized by the INSPQ as having a high risk of complications related to COVID-19	Employees who meet one of the criteria for exemption will have their salaries maintained based on the schedule known and agreed on in the work contract.
One of the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to work and residing with a 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</li> </ul>	The health of a loved one residing under the same roof does not constitute an exemption criterion recognized by the public health authorities.  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.  Analyze the possibility of the employee working remotely.  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

health, safety or education reasons	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.  Their salary is maintained for the time worked, if applicable.  <i>*Note that employees taking leave without pay may apply for the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) if they meet the eligibility criteria.</i>
One of the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In isolation and identified as having been in moderate- to high-risk contact with a case confirmed by the public health authorities</li> <li>• In isolation, as a member of the same household is showing symptoms or is waiting for a COVID-19 test or results</li> <li>• In isolation due to noticeable symptoms</li> <li>• Waiting for COVID-19 screening test results, with symptoms</li> </ul>	If the employee is able to work, whenever possible, encourage them to work remotely.  Their salary is maintained in accordance with the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract, for the duration recommended by the public health authorities, whether or not the employee carries out any work.  If the employee is unable to work, 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.  <i>*Note that employees taking leave without pay may apply for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB) if they meet the eligibility criteria.</i>
Contracted COVID-19 outside of the workplace	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.
Contracted COVID-19 in the workplace	Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, the employee may be entitled to benefits provided under the <i>Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases (ARIAOD)</i> .

Other situations	
Situation	Remuneration
In isolation after returning from a personal trip, with or without symptoms	Analyze the possibility of the employee working remotely.  If the employee is unable to work full-time from home, for the time not worked, the employee must use the 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.  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.

**86. How are the new financial measures announced by the federal government applied?**

Please see the following link for more information about the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) and the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB):

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/transition.html>

**87. Must the compensation for oversized classes be paid when distance education services are provided?**

The financial compensation for classes with more than the maximum number of students is set out in Chapter 8-0.00 and Appendix 18 (FSE), XVIII (FAE) and XXI subject to Appendix XX (QPAT) of the provincial collective agreements. In order to be entitled to the compensation for having more than

the maximum number of students in a group, the following condition must be met: have a number of students registered for at least half the class days in a given month. The appendix also sets out a formula that takes into account the duration of the teaching provided to this group by the teacher during a given portion of the school calendar.

88. **Does the minimum number of hours of educational services for students who are absent for more than 2 days for reasons related to COVID-19 involve financial compensation equal to 1/1000 of the annual salary for teaching staff who have exceeded the standard workload?**

Clause 8-6.02 C) of the collective agreements (FSE-CSQ, FAE and QPAT) provides for compensation when a teacher's workload is exceeded. However, a teacher's workload is only exceeded when the school service centre or school board assigns a teacher to a task with a longer duration than provided for in the collective agreements. In that sense, management of exceeded workloads must be evaluated on a case by case basis by employers, as each situation is different.

89. **[NEW] Will the temporary 10% bonus for instructors who were teaching courses as part of the program leading to the Health Care Facility Patient Service Support Skills Training Certificate be maintained for the next cohort?**

Ministerial Order 2020-044 states that teachers who teach courses as part of the Health Care Facility Patient Service Support program benefit from a temporary bonus of 10% that is not a contributory amount for the purposes of a pension plan and that applies to the salary scale or hourly rate applicable to their position for the hours worked for which they are remunerated as part of this program. As long as the health emergency continues and Order 2020-044 is renewed, teachers who are covered by this order are entitled to the bonus.

## Labour relations

90. **What are the main guides available to the school system?**

### Public health guides

- [Self-care Guide – COVID-19](#)
- [Self-care Guide for Parents – COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 symptom self-assessment tool](#)
- [Instructions for people awaiting screening or a COVID-19 test result](#)

### CNESST guides

- [Questions and answers – COVID-19](#)
- [Toolkit for the education network](#)

### INSPQ guides

- [Guide pour la gestion des cas et des contacts de COVID-19 dans les services de garde et dans les établissements d'enseignement préscolaire, primaire et secondaire](#) (available in French only)
- [Schools and teaching environments – COVID-19 Preventive Measures in the Workplace](#)
- [Recommandations intérimaires pour la protection des travailleurs avec maladies chroniques](#) (available in French only)
- [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)
- [Recommandations intérimaires pour la protection des travailleurs immunosupprimés.](#) (available in French only)
- [Mesures de prévention en milieu de travail: recommandations intérimaires.](#) (available in French only)
- [COVID-19 \(SRAS-CoV-2\) : Pregnant and Breastfeeding Workers – Preventive Measures in the Workplace.](#)

**91. Can an employee refuse to follow the health guidelines issued by the public health authorities?**

The current public health emergency requires that everyone respect the public health guidelines. It is therefore critically important that security measures not be relaxed by staff members, even when students are not present (e.g. in staff kitchen or dining room, or teachers' room).

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.

**92. Do specific measures need to be taken for staff moving between schools?**

School service centres and school boards are responsible for the health and safety of all their staff. Therefore, they must implement the health and safety measures recommended in the [Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School System](#), produced by the CNESST. Currently, based on the guidelines issued by the public health authorities, there is no reason that an employee cannot work at multiple locations. In the event of an outbreak in a school, the public health authorities will issue instructions to school staff, including itinerant staff working at that school.

**93. If there is a shortage of employees in some schools, can staff in another job category be reassigned to the school in need?**

Ministerial Order 2020-008 allows educational institutions to reassign their staff if, when and where they are needed. The Order requires that the relevant unions and professional associations be consulted before this measure is used, unless the urgency of the situation makes this impossible.

**94. If there is a shortage of employees in some schools, can staff who do not work full-time be reassigned to other tasks, such as disinfection? If this is permitted, is that considered an expense related to COVID-19?**

Yes. Ministerial Order 2020-008 allows educational institutions to reassign their staff if, when and where they are needed. The Order requires that the relevant unions and professional associations be consulted before this measure is used, unless the urgency of the situation makes this impossible.

Therefore, if the school service centre or school board is able to specifically establish the remunerated hours and to demonstrate that it is additional work taken on by the staff members that would not have been performed if not for the emergency situation, all of the expenses incurred due to the pandemic must be recorded in the additional costs directly associated with COVID-19. In that respect, for the 2020-2021 year, all educational institutions must record their expenses using specified methods so they can report on these expenses at the appropriate time.

**95. If there is a lack of staff in some schools, can we reassign remedial teachers and education consultants to teaching positions?**

Ministerial Order 2020-008 allows educational institutions to reassign their staff if, when and where they are needed. However, in the current context, these professionals should, whenever possible, be allowed to focus on their primary mandate, supporting the most vulnerable students. If all other solutions have been exhausted (using the substitute bank, calling on graduating students in teaching programs, etc.), another professional may be assigned a teaching task.

**96. Will the teacher's workload include spending more time supervising?**

The management of staff must comply with the health and safety measures recommended in the *Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School System* published by the CNESST and the teacher's workload, including the number of hours allotted to teaching. The flexibility that the Back-to-School Plan affords teachers to manage their own time applies mainly to aspects other than teaching. It is the responsibility of institutions to provide the maximum amount of flexibility already provided for in the collective agreements. Additionally, supervision may be delegated to teachers other than the homeroom teacher, or other members of the staff if necessary. This also applies to some catch-up measures (equivalent to "remediation" in the provincial collective Agreements), if necessary.

Note that Ministerial Order 2020-008 allows educational institutions to reassign their staff if, when and where they are needed. The Order requires that the relevant unions and professional associations be consulted before this measure is used, unless the urgency of the situation makes this impossible.

**97. What ratio applies for the creation of groups for distance education?**

The provisions of the provincial collective agreements apply (especially those regarding the creation of groups of students), taking into account the social 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.

**98. Are educational institutions required to provide Internet access to staff who are working from home?**

Internet connection fees for employees who are working from home are not reimbursable expenses. It is the responsibility of the employee to pay all the fees associated with the home, work set-up and telecommunications.

Note that the government is offering deductions to taxpayers who have worked from home because of COVID-19. For more information, consult Revenu Québec: <https://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/press-room/news/details/168066>.

**99. Does the organization of work need to be modified in order to respect the recommendations from the INSPQ and the public health authorities and follow the government guidelines on working from home?**

As stated in the various guides published by the CNESST and the INSPQ, modifications must be made in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Ministerial Order 2020-105 states that all employees of businesses, organizations or the civil service who perform administrative tasks or office work will continue this work remotely from their private residence or its equivalent, except for employees whose presence is essential for the activities of the business, organization or civil service to continue.

Therefore, the organization of work should be reviewed in order to encourage the use of the technological tools available, job tasks permitting. Accordingly, requests to work from home should be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the employer.

With respect to teachers, teaching must be done in person or remotely, depending on the educational organization methods in place at the time. When distance education is in effect and working from home is possible, based on schedules, it must be prioritized. Working from home is also preferred, where feasible, for other tasks that do not require the presence of students and that can be performed remotely without hindering collaboration with colleagues. Requests to work from home should still be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the employer.

**100. [MODIFIED] If some classes are closed, which platform should be used for effective distance education?**

For effective teaching, the use of a secure digital learning environment that applies the principles of personal information protection is recommended (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, an information document was sent to the individuals responsible for information security at educational institutions on October 15. The information document 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:
  - must include reasonable security methods, taking into account the sensitive nature of personal information
  - 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)
  - 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 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, training for teaching staff is offered by different network partners. 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: <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/current-initiatives/digital-action-plan/training-resources/>.

#### 101. Does the role of teachers include providing distance education?

Yes. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Order in Council 885-2020, signed on August 19, 2020, and amended by Order in Council 943-2020, signed on September 9, 2020, states that the role of teachers includes providing distance education. Therefore, the teacher's workload has not been modified, other than by adding another form of teaching to fulfill their duties. Thus, the role of teachers includes both in-person teaching and distance education.

#### 102. Can staff living in the United States cross the border in order to work?

Employees in the school system can cross the border in order to work if they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19. When these employees cross the border, they must answer questions about their health related to the symptoms of COVID-19. If they have no symptoms, they will be permitted to enter Canada in order to work. These employees will not be required to self-isolate when returning home. Border services will provide them with information, including the symptoms to watch for.

#### 103. [NEW] Which groups of people have an increased risk of complications from COVID-19?

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 *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: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2914-protection-travailleurs-immunosupprimees-covid19.pdf> (available in French only).

#### 104. Are pregnant women automatically required to leave the workplace?

No. See the document entitled COVID-19: [Pregnant and Breastfeeding Workers – Preventive Measures in the Workplace](#).

Pregnant women are considered a vulnerable group, making it necessary to implement specific preventive measures in their workplace.

Therefore, the INSPQ recommends that the educational institution implement measures for the pregnant worker immediately and for the duration of the pregnancy, regardless of her immunity status, so that:

- a minimum 2-metre physical distance between the worker and her colleagues can be assured
- if work must be carried out within less than 2 metres of other people, an appropriate physical barrier, such as a glass partition, can be installed; personal protective equipment (masks, safety glasses or visors) is not considered a physical barrier.

#### 105. [MODIFIED] What are the guidelines that must be followed for staff who request an exemption?

Once the employee has provided supporting documentation, the employer must verify whether the employee meets one of the exemption criteria, that is, whether the employee falls into one of the groups that the INSPQ has recognized as having an increased vulnerability to COVID-19. If the employee belongs to one of these groups, the following steps must be taken:

- Each situation must be analyzed by the employer on a case-by-case basis. As the employee has been determined to be at risk, it is the responsibility of the employer to assess whether the employee's presence in the workplace is necessary.

- Employers who believe that the employee's presence in the workplace is necessary must ensure that the public health guidelines are being respected in the workplace, including the 2-metre requirement for physical distancing and sanitation measures.
- Additional protective measures intended to protect workers (2 metres of distancing maintained at all times or the presence of physical barriers), the possibility of working from home (full-time or part-time) or reassigning the employee to other tasks must be considered.

If the worker does not agree with a decision made by the employer, they can exercise their right of refusal as provided for under the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*.

106. **[MODIFIED]** What is the right of refusal provided for under the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*?

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

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 AOHS, 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 and the work methods.
  - 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 prevention representative to have them examine the situation and determine the corrections that must be made. If the employer and the union do not agree on the corrections that must be made and the worker continues to refuse the work, a CNESST inspector is required to be present on-site. The inspector will determine, as soon as possible, if there is a danger or not, ensuring that the process described in the AOHS is followed.

For more information about CNESST intervention, see the document describing interventions related to the right of refusal, available in French only.

107. **[MODIFIED] How is it determined that a worker contracted COVID-19 in the workplace and is therefore covered by the CNESST?**

It is the responsibility of the CNESST to determine if the worker meets the eligibility criteria, including for cases of COVID 19 contracted in the workplace, in order to be covered or not covered under the *Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases* (ARIAOD).

To learn more about the procedure for making a COVID-19 related claim, see Question 56 of the CNESST Questions and Answers page: <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/prevention-and-safety/covid-19/questions-and-answers-covid-19>.

108. **[MODIFIED] Will measures be implemented to help school staff who are experiencing significant stress?**

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to implement 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:

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/forms-and-publications/quick-reference-work-related-psychosocial-risks>.

Finally, the government of Québec has created a digital tool to allow individuals to manage their own emotional health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Getting Better My Way* tool is available at: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/protecting-your-well-being-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

109. **[MODIFIED] If an employee contracted COVID-19 after travelling to a foreign country and was required to remain in that country until they recovered from COVID-19, are they still required to self-isolate and quarantine upon arriving in Canada?**

Yes. Based on the federal government rules, any person entering Canada, whether or not they have symptoms and whether or not they have contracted COVID-19, must self-isolate or quarantine for 14 days. For more information, please see <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid>.

110. **[NEW] Who is responsible for the disinfection of materials in schools?**

School service centres and school boards, as employers, are responsible for the health and safety of all of their staff: Ministerial Order 2020-008 allows educational institutions to reassign their staff if, when and where they are needed. It is the responsibility of the school team to apply the recommendations issued by the CNESST and the public health authorities related to cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. In addition to the [Guide de normes sanitaires en milieu de travail pour le réseau scolaire](#), published by the CNESST and available in French only, see the INSPQ document on [Surface Cleaning and Disinfection](#).

## Retired staff

111. **Who are the retirees targeted by the new measure introduced under Order in Council 964-2020 to address the shortage of teachers during the public health emergency, what is the remuneration offered and when will this measure end?**

Any person who retired from the school system after July 1, 2015, and who holds a Québec teaching licence is targeted by this measure. They will be compensated at the rate called for in the single salary scale starting on the first day they return to teaching or supply teaching. This remuneration applies as of September 21, 2020. As long as the health emergency continues and Order 964-2020 is renewed, individuals who are covered by this order are entitled to the applicable remuneration.

112. **Are the retirees who benefit from this measure going to see a negative impact on their retirement pensions?**

A retired teacher who is a beneficiary of the RREGOP and who is returning to work in a position covered by the RREGOP (e.g. teacher) can no longer participate in the RREGOP. They do not contribute to the RREGOP and they continue to receive their pension.

A retired administrator (e.g. school principal), who is a beneficiary of the PPMP (Pension Plan of Management Personnel) and who returns to work in a position covered by the RREGOP (e.g. teacher)

may choose to participate again in the PPMP. In that case, their pension is suspended, and they start to contribute to the PPMP again. However, the majority of retired beneficiaries of the PPMP who are returning to work will find it more advantageous to not participate in the PPMP again. In that case, they do not contribute to the PPMP and they continue to receive their pension.

**113. What is the temporary relaxation of requirements related to the Pension Plan of Management Personnel (PPMP) referred to in Ministerial Order 2020-102?**

As of December 9, 2020, for the duration of the public health crisis, a retired PPMP beneficiary who chooses not to participate in the plan upon returning to work may come back to work in a senior or non-managerial position in a school service centre, school board or private educational institution without their salary being included in the calculation of the limit, provided that this return to work is related to a need resulting from the health crisis and the employer can demonstrate this to Retraite Québec.

As a reminder regarding the limit provided for in the PPMP: a retired person may receive their retirement pension in full provided the sum of their annual pension and their salary earned upon their return to work does not exceed the salary they were earning prior to retiring (limit).

## Costs related to COVID-19

**114. Expenses related to eco-friendly treatment of used procedural masks in schools can be considered an additional expense associated with the pandemic. Educational institutions can declare this type of expense.**

Expenses related to eco-friendly treatment of used procedural masks in schools are considered an additional expense associated with the pandemic. Educational institutions can declare this type of expense.

In the context of the pandemic, the Ministère will complete the necessary process for reimbursement of additional expenses related to COVID-19 as soon as possible in order to avoid creating deficits for school service centres and school boards.

**115. [MODIFIED] Will additional financial assistance be allocated to make up for the loss of revenue and for additional expenses related to COVID-19?**

Currently, the relevant guidelines come from the Comptroller of Finance, who has provided instructions to all ministries and organizations regarding additional expenses related to the pandemic, lost revenues and savings. For the 2020-2021 year, all public organizations must keep detailed accounting records using the specified procedure in order to report them at the appropriate time.

Since the return to school last fall, the Minister of Education has announced various additional financial assistance measures.

The Ministère will analyze the evolution of the situation and the financial consequences for the school network based on the impacts experienced during the school year. Information will be provided in due course about the measures related to additional costs associated with COVID-19. Note that it is essential to declare all impacts of the pandemic in the relevant documentation, both lost revenues and savings (unused budget measures), as well as the additional expenses.

Private schools are asked to record expenses related to the health emergency that may be eligible for compensation at a later date.

## Private educational institutions

**116. Do these measures apply in the same way in the private network?**

The standards and requirements apply equally and without exception to the network of private educational institutions. As the Ministère is not a party to the contracts between parents and private educational institutions, it is the responsibility of each institution to discuss with parents and establish methods to respond to the current exceptional circumstances. In this light, the institution can create a specific service agreement with parents to cover, for example, additional fees related to new service terms and conditions. However, the terms and conditions established must comply with the relevant public health guidelines.

**117. Are private educational institutions required to provide distance learning services to students with medical conditions that make them vulnerable?**

Yes. Since September, in-person attendance at school is compulsory for all students. However, students who have a health condition that makes them vulnerable can be exempted from in-person attendance by providing a doctor's note. Physicians have been informed by the public health authorities of the conditions that may justify an absence from schools. Students living in the same household as someone with a health condition that makes them vulnerable may also be exempted.

Provision has been made for a minimum number of hours of educational services to be offered through distance learning by school service centres, school boards and private educational institutions for students in elementary and secondary school who have a health condition or who live with someone who has a health condition that puts them at risk for serious complications if they contract COVID-19, should a physician recommend that these students not attend school in person. Private educational institutions are therefore required to provide distance learning services. The institution may, however, seek a specific service agreement with parents to cover the additional costs associated with new service methods. If such an agreement cannot be reached, the institution must still offer distance learning services, as it is a matter of public health under section 123 of the *Public Health Act*, to protect the health of the population.

**118. Can a private educational institution break a contract to provide educational services by claiming that it is incapable of providing the required services, as in the case of a request for exemption from school attendance?**

The institution must take all possible steps to honour the contract. In order to do so, it may seek a specific service agreement with parents to cover the additional costs associated with new service methods. However, if it proves genuinely impossible for the institution to offer distance learning services due to exceptional circumstances, as a last resort, the contract may be broken. In such a case, the educational institution must, under section 38 of the *Act respecting private education*, inform the school service centre or school board with jurisdiction over the student's compulsory school attendance of the termination of the contract to provide educational services.

**119. Do the guidelines for staff remuneration also apply to 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.

**120. Will the Ministère de l'Éducation also provide computer equipment to students attending private schools?**

Apart from these measures, it is the responsibility of educational institutions to manage the digital tools necessary for providing educational services. All private schools may be required to provide distance education services, depending on the health measures in effect. The institution may, however, seek a specific service agreement with parents to cover the additional costs associated with new service methods. Measures are included in the budget rules for accredited subsidized private schools in order to support the digital transition throughout the school network. However, the Ministère does not offer a specific program for subsidizing the purchase of equipment for families.