



Orientations for back-to-school 2021

Premises

In the context of the government’s reopening plan, it is time to establish the orientations for going back to school in the fall.

- These orientations take into account the fact that, when school starts again, 75% of the population aged 12 and up will have been vaccinated, with the majority of 12- to 17-year-olds having received two doses and the epidemiological situation will have stabilized.
- While elementary students are still not authorized to receive the vaccine at this time, clinical trials are currently under way. The findings of these trials are expected to be positive, allowing elementary students to receive both doses of the vaccine by the end of 2021.
- Before schools reopen in August, these orientations will be revised in light of the latest epidemiological data and based on how the vaccination of the general population progresses.

School organization to focus on **THREE AREAS**

- 1 **Return to school under conditions that are as normal as possible** for students and staff
- 2 **Maintain** health measures and **remain vigilant** about air quality
- 3 **Plan** contingency measures for possible implementation **depending on how the epidemiological situation evolves**, to be revised in August

AREA 1

Return to school under conditions that are as normal as possible for students and staff

For all levels (preschool, elementary, secondary, vocational training and adult general education):

- Normal school organization, without restrictions requiring stable class groups
- No procedural masks or face coverings required for students or staff
- Full educational services (including special pedagogical projects and school outings)
- Additional support measures for vulnerable students or those with academic delays
- Resumption of extracurricular activities
- School transportation under normal rules and **without physical distancing restrictions**
- Cafeterias and lunch rooms organized as usual

AREA 2

Maintain health measures and remain vigilant about air quality

Health measures

- Continue with cleaning and disinfection measures, particularly with regard to frequently touched surfaces
- Continue with hand hygiene routines for students and staff, as per CNESST recommendations
- Continue to evaluate children with symptoms and isolate them, if necessary

Air quality

The Ministère and the educational institutions maintain constant vigilance regarding air quality in classrooms, applying measures to correct any problematic situations. An expert in industrial ventilation from the Ministère-network technical committee will guide the Ministère as it implements the following measures:

- Develop a new protocol for constant IT monitoring of air quality in classrooms and identify IT solutions
- Purchase CO₂ monitors and other devices to ensure optimal air quality in all classrooms across Québec
- Install devices during the 2021-2022 school year, beginning with schools that use natural ventilation
- Implement a summer program for the maintenance of ventilation equipment and windows in summer 2021
- Continue the program intended to correct problematic situations

AREA 3

Plan contingency measures for possible implementation depending on how the epidemiological situation evolves, to be revised in August

If required, one or more contingency measures could be introduced to keep class and school closures to a minimum in case of outbreaks and to avoid distance education.

In elementary schools, in case of an outbreak (especially before vaccination):

- Restrict the number of groups a student may be part of without having to respect physical distancing measures
- Add further physical distancing measures among students from different classes (e.g. lunchtime, recess, daycare service)
- Assign seats on school buses to allow for contact tracing
- Go back to wearing procedural masks in certain circumstances (e.g. school transportation, common areas)
- Should these measures prove to be inadequate, follow the measures set out in the emergency protocol for distance education in the case of class closures

In secondary schools, vocational training centres and adult general education centres, occasionally, if required:

- Add physical distancing measures
- Go back to wearing procedural masks in certain circumstances
- Should these measures prove to be inadequate, follow the measures set out in the emergency protocol for distance education in the case of class closures:
 - Return to alternating in-person and remote attendance in Secondary III, IV and V
 - Use mainly distance education in adult education and vocational training, except for exams, workshops and laboratories

This plan is subject to review before school starts again in August.