



September 9, 2020 (updates in red from Q&A September 3, 2020)
Schools and Centres in the Context of COVID-19
Summary for QPAT Local Unions

NOTE: This document is subject to change as new Q&A documents are released by the Ministry

Group Assemblies (Meetings with parents or staff members)

- Group meetings and assemblies should be held remotely if possible, but this is not a requirement.
- The principal should review the work organisation and favour the use of technological tools for meetings. If the meetings take place in school, the staff must respect the two-metre rule.
- Schools must ensure that current sanitary rules are applied:
 - No more than 250 people should attend.
 - The 1.5 metre distancing requirement applies only in places where people are seated and relatively immobile, and do not speak much or at all – for example, in performance venues. Procedural masks or face-coverings must be worn.
 - Sanitary rules must be enforced.

School Organization

- **Outdoor** assemblies of more than 250 people are **allowed** by the public health authorities in schools.
- Recess and break schedules for students must be changed to comply with this requirement.
- 250 students are authorised to be in the cafeteria but the one-metre distance between class groups applies.
- Parents may be present in the classroom for the “parent” component of four-year-old Kindergarten and for the *Passe-Partout* program. Parents must wear face-coverings at all times and must maintain a physical distance of two metres from children who are not part of their family, and from other adults.
- The following physical distancing measures must be applied:
 - No physical distancing between students in the same stable class group.
 - One metre between students from different class groups.
 - Two metres between students and staff members.

- No new group at any level may be formed with students from different class groups.
- **Partial integration of a student (as per the IEP) into a regular setting is not possible at the moment in order to maintain the stable class group.**
- Avoid a semester-based approach so as not to penalize students if another lockdown occurs.
- Some secondary schools may have to use distance teaching for some programs in Secondary IV and V. However, the MEES has stated that each student must be present at school for at least 50% of the time for each subject on his or her timetable.
- **Students will be allowed to do internships while respecting CNESST sanitary rules applicable to each workplace.**
- **If a student is withdrawn, unless symptoms are present, his or her relatives can remain at school; following the test result of the withdrawn student, public health will make the decision about whether or not the relative should be subject to isolation.**

Educational Outings

- Educational and cultural outings are possible if the applicable sanitary rules are applied.
- Organizations, artists and speakers can come to the school and into the classroom to lead activities. If the visitors are in the presence of students, a physical distance of two metres must be maintained. The guests must wear face-coverings at all times, except when they sit down to eat or drink and that a distance of 1.5 metres can be maintained.

Procedure masks and face-coverings

- For teachers
 - The school service centre must provide the protective equipment required by its staff members. This means that procedure masks and face-coverings must be provided by the employer, in sufficient quantities so that they can be used normally by all staff members in accordance with CNESST or public health authority instructions.
 - Teachers working for at least 15 cumulative minutes per day at a distance of less than two metres from the students must wear a procedure mask and eye protection. This includes all preschool-level teaching staff. If the two-metre distancing requirement can be met, a face-covering is sufficient when moving around (in normal circumstances).
 - The two-metre distancing requirement must always be maintained even if wearing a face-covering. Otherwise, a teacher who works more closely with any students for more than 15 minutes, must wear a procedure mask and eye protection provided by the employer.
- For students
 - Preschool children and students in the first and second cycles of elementary school are not required to wear masks or face-coverings.

- Students in the third cycle of elementary school and all levels of secondary school must wear a procedure mask or face-covering when they are not in the classroom with their closed group, except in the following cases:
 - Students with a handicap that prevents them from putting on the mask or face-covering themselves, without help.
 - Students with a handicap that prevents them from understanding the instructions regarding the wearing of procedure masks or face-coverings, or for whom the instruction would cause significant disruption (e.g. ID, ASD, etc.).
 - During sports activities.
 - When eating or drinking.
 - When seated at a distance of 1.5 metres from other people (e.g. in the auditorium).
 - Hands should be washed or sanitized before touching the mask or face-covering. These should only be removed by using the elastics or material surrounding the ears.
 - The mask should be folded in two with the outer parts of the mask folded over each other, and placed in a clean personal bag. The student should avoid touching the outside part of the mask when placing it back on his/her face.
 - Students can participate in activities such as singing without wearing their masks as long as they are in their respective classroom “bubbles”.

Teacher’s Workload

- The teacher’s workload and regular workweek are as described in the collective agreement.
- Compensation of 1/1000 of the salary (clause 8-7.02 e)) must be paid for exceeding the workload
- MEES, CNESST and the public health authorities all recommend that teachers should be able to work at home when their presence at school is not needed.
- The text of ministerial order 2020-008 continues to apply with regard to possible changes to the teachers’ collective agreement (assignment, timetable, etc.). This is an exceptional measure, so the text should be interpreted restrictively. The employer must take all the necessary steps to comply with the collective agreement before resorting to the ministerial order. Its use must be in connection with public health instructions to protect the general public.

Please note:

Equipment and premises must be cleaned by the support staff concerned (clause 8-2.01).

Vulnerable Students and Students with Special Needs

- Plan a reception protocol for vulnerable students, to provide a personal connection, and pay special attention to the negative impacts of the pandemic.

- Provide complementary services for students who are present at school and for those who cannot attend for medical or other reasons, to ensure ongoing learning.
- Review the individualized education plans of students with special needs and adjust them to reflect appropriate support and services for students, including students in a distance-learning situation.
- **Students who are incapable of distance learning due to their disability or vulnerability must have their learning activities adapted by the school board and school to meet the minimal learning requirements.**
- Deploy complementary educational services for all students.

Teaching of Curricula

- The usual provisions concerning the teaching of all subjects in accordance with the official programs, and the provisions concerning compulsory content,¹ must be applied.
- For specialized courses and science courses, dedicated rooms can be used (music room, gymnasium, laboratory, etc.), if all the equipment is disinfected between groups, before the next group arrives. Access to sports facilities is also authorized.

Learning Consolidation and Refresher Period

- A consolidation and refresher period should be planned at the beginning and throughout the year before undertaking new learning, to address any potential gaps. Methods are decided locally (homework assistance, tutoring, mentoring, etc.). Special attention should be given to students in transitional years (e.g. grade 6), among others.
- The MEES has produced a support document to remind teachers of the essential knowledge for each elementary and secondary level program of study.
<https://qpat-apeq.qc.ca/covid-19-information-from-mees-and-other-ministries/>

Evaluation of Learning

- All the usual provisions regarding the single report card apply, as do those concerning local and ministerial examinations and certification of studies.
- The first communication must be sent no later than October 15, to provide feedback for parents.

¹ Educational and career guidance, sex education, cardiopulmonary resuscitation training.
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Please note:

Since the annual instruction has not been published, the usual provisions relating to the progressive nature of evaluation for certain subjects and cross-curricular competencies has not yet been confirmed. Standards and rules for the evaluation of learning and a summary for parents will not be prepared until the annual instruction has been published, so that it can be taken into account if necessary. QPAT is continuing to pressure the Government in order to reduce the evaluation workload.

Distance Education and Minimum Number of Hours

- Distance education will be provided for students whose medical conditions require it. Teachers working exclusively on this task will follow up with them by providing the minimum number of hours of educational services.
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/back-to-school-plan-fall-covid-19/minimum-number-hours-educational-services/>
- Distance education will be provided for students for whom classes or schools are closed due to a COVID-19 outbreak. The same teacher and professional will provide the minimum number of hours of educational services.
<https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/back-to-school-plan-fall-covid-19/minimum-number-hours-educational-services/>
- All other students who do not return to school must be homeschooled by their parents, in accordance with MEES requirements.
<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/school-boards/support-and-assistance/homeschooling/>
- Students awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test or those who are infected with the virus will receive academic follow-up from their teachers in the same way as students who are absent due to other types of sickness (cold, flu, gastroenteritis, etc.).
- If another lockdown is ordered, the school must apply the school board emergency protocol, which must be ready for implementation by September 15.

Please note:

The union must be consulted when the emergency protocol is prepared.

Staff Training

The MEES provides teachers with training on the implementation of curricula and the resumption of learning. It is available in the form of capsules on the MEES YouTube Channel and can be viewed at any time.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7xK7_BJ0pSUizLJbL94tKvBlUxJa2K8

The training is divided into three components:

1. Learning and Enabling Learning: Embracing and Implementing Curricula

2. Identifying Students' Needs to Optimize Planning and Learning
3. Differentiated Instruction Through Pedagogical Flexibility

Adult General Education and Vocational Training

- It is preferable for students to be present at the centre. However, distance teaching is possible for some theoretical content, depending on the situation (number of students, hot or cold zones).
- In the classroom, the recommended distance between students is 1.5 metres. In other locations (laboratories, cafeteria and library), the required distance is two metres.
- **The same stable class group does not apply in these sectors.**
- All students, staff members and visitors must wear face-coverings when outside the classroom.
- For programs where physical distancing is impossible, protective equipment must be worn.

Vulnerable Workers, Directives and Remuneration

- Special recommendations are made for four categories of workers, to protect people who are more vulnerable to or at risk of complications from COVID-19:
 1. Individuals with weakened immune systems
 2. Individuals with chronic diseases
 3. Pregnant women
 4. Individuals aged 70 or over
- Chronic diseases are:
 - “uncontrolled” or “complex” chronic cardiac or pulmonary disease, serious enough to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care;
 - “uncontrolled” or “complex” diabetes, serious enough to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care;
 - chronic “complex” liver disease (including cirrhosis) or kidney disease, serious enough to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care;
 - “uncontrolled” or “complex” hypertension, serious enough to require medical follow-up or hospital care;
 - Significant obesity (i.e. BMI of 40 or over).
- A medical condition that causes decreased clearance of respiratory secretions or a risk of aspiration (e.g. cognitive disorder, spinal cord injury, convulsive disorder, neuromuscular disorder, etc.).
- This list of diseases involving a risk of complications from COVID-19 is taken from the interim recommendations published by the INSPQ. Please click on the following links for further details:

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/publications/2914-protection-travailleurs-immunosupprimes-covid19>

https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2967_protection_travailleurs_sante_maladies_chroniques.pdf

- Among other things, the employer must ensure that the organization of the work and the working procedures and techniques do not adversely affect the safety or health of workers (*Act respecting occupational health and safety, s. 51*)
- The INSPQ recommends that schools should immediately implement measures for pregnant workers, for the duration of their pregnancy, and regardless of their immune status, in order to:
 - ensure at least two metres of physical distancing from students and co-workers;
 - install an adequate physical barrier for work performed within two metres, such as a glass separator. Personal protective equipment (mask, goggles or visor) is not considered to be a physical barrier.

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2912-pregnant-nursing-workers-community-transmission-covid19.pdf>

Below are the directives and remuneration from the MEQ and are applicable to school staff members, based on the various possible situations arising from COVID-19:

Justified situations outside the worker’s control

| Reason | Directives and Remuneration |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has one or more health conditions making him/her vulnerable to COVID-19 • Is 70 years of age or over | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the information above regarding the four categories of workers with vulnerabilities. • Consider the possibility of allowing the worker to work remotely. • If remote work is not possible, all workers with vulnerabilities must return to work and, if they consider it appropriate, may exercise their right of refusal. • Workers who have reasonable grounds to believe that the fact of performing their work would expose them to a danger to their health, safety or physical well-being are entitled to refuse to perform that work, as provided for in section 12 of the <i>Act respecting occupational health and safety</i>. • The danger must be real and objective, and must not be fear-based. Apprehension or worry is not sufficient to conclude that a danger exists. • To do this, the worker must call the CNESST’s general number and ask to talk to an on-duty inspector at 1 844 838-0808. • The CNESST, as quickly as possible, will decide whether or not a danger exists, using the procedure set out in the <i>Act respecting occupational health and safety</i>, i.e. the worker notifies his or her immediate superior, the employer or the employer’s representative and, where applicable, notifies the representative of the union or prevention representative. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for work and lives with a child or relative who has one or more health conditions rendering him or her vulnerable to COVID-19. • Fit for work but must be present at home to assist a child or family member for reasons relating to health, safety or education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health of a relative living under the same roof is not recognized by the public health authorities as a valid criterion for exemption. • The employee must provide a written document attesting to the person’s vulnerability. • The employee must show that he or she has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that someone else can be present to assist the vulnerable person and limit the duration of the leave. • Consider the possibility of allowing the employee to work remotely. |

| Reason | Directives and Remuneration |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the employee is unable to perform his or her full workload, he or she must first, for the time not worked, use up his or her leave for parental and family responsibilities, and must then use up all other leave provided for in the contract of employment (e.g. vacation, unpaid leave). However, sick leave cannot be used and must be kept for sickness. • Salary is maintained for time worked, if any. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-isolating by order of the public health authorities, with or without symptoms. • Self-isolating after being identified by the public health authorities as being in contact with a confirmed case. • Self-isolating at the employer's request after exhibiting symptoms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>If the employee is fit for work</u>: Where possible, allow the employee to work remotely. • Salary is maintained according to the known schedule and as agreed in the contract of employment, for the duration recommended by the public health authorities, whether or not the employee actually works. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting the results of a COVID-19 screening test, with or without symptoms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>If the employee is fit for work</u>: Where possible, allow the employee to work remotely. • Salary is maintained according to the known schedule and as agreed in the contract of employment, for the duration recommended by the public health authorities, whether or not the employee actually works. • If the test is positive, the employee may be compensated under the <i>Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases</i> or the salary insurance plan, depending whether he or she contracted COVID-19 after being exposed to it in the workplace or in other circumstances. • In the case of disability, the employee is presumed to have begun the waiting period, if any, while awaiting the results and while in self-isolation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted COVID-19 outside the workplace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee must obtain a medical certificate confirming the diagnosis. • The employee may be compensated under the salary insurance plan provided for in the collective agreement. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted COVID-19 at work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee must obtain a medical certificate confirming the diagnosis. • Subject to meeting the eligibility conditions, the employee may be compensated under the <i>Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational</i> |

| Reason | Directives and Remuneration |
|---|---|
| | <i>diseases.</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracted Covid-19 at work or outside work but the employee is fit to work because the symptoms are light. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it is not possible to work remotely because of the health condition, the employee may be compensated under the salary insurance plan provided for in the collective agreement (otherwise, if the employee is fit to work, the salary is maintained). |

Other Situations

| Reason | Directives and Remuneration |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee in self-isolation after returning from a personal trip, with or without symptoms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the possibility of allowing the employee to work remotely. Where the employee is unable to perform his or her full workload, he or she must first, for the time not worked, use up his or her leave for parental and family responsibilities, and must then use up all other leave provided for in the contract of employment (e.g. vacation, unpaid leave). However, sick leave cannot be used and must be kept for sickness. Salary is maintained for the time worked, if any. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee refuses to work for no valid reason. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each situation must be examined on a case-by-case basis by the employer. Administrative or disciplinary measures may apply. |

Cleaning and Disinfection of Teaching Materials, Surfaces and Rooms

The INSPQ information sheet on schools and educational institutions describes the cleaning and disinfection procedures for surfaces and premises, according to whether or not a person with symptoms is present. <https://www.inspq.gc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/3056-milieus-scolaires-enseignement-covid19.pdf> (in French only)

- The MEES requires that surfaces and equipment must be cleaned before a new group enters a room, a laboratory, a workshop or a cloakroom.
- Teachers can distribute materials and collect them for evaluation within the same class group only. They must reduce the number of times the materials are handled and must wash their hands regularly.
- Cleaning followed by disinfection is recommended for all frequently touched surfaces and objects, including educational materials.
- The INSPQ recommends that school staff members should wash their clothing after each workday, in hot water, using their regular detergent.
- The appropriate protective measures for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, materials, equipment and premises must be extended if a person infected with COVID-19 was present. <https://www.inspq.gc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/3054-nettoyage-desinfection-surfaces-covid19.pdf> (in French only)

Please note:

The rules for disinfection in preschool/Kindergarten classes are the same as for other levels of teaching.

Ventilation of Schools

- The employer must supervise the maintenance of the work surface and is required to provide adequate ventilation and heating (s. 51, subparagraph 4, *Act respecting occupational health and safety* (R.S.Q., c. S-2.1)).
- Where the conditions require it, air conditioners and pedestal fans can be used carefully, in compliance with certain rules. <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2992-indoor-environment-covid19.pdf>
- The *Regulation respecting occupational health and safety* (c. S-2.1, r.13) contains a set of standards for indoor air quality and ventilation (Division XI, sections 101 to 115).
- The INSPQ has produced a Question/Answer document on the subject on COVID-19 Indoor environment which sets out good ventilation practices for the pandemic. <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2992-indoor-environment-covid19.pdf>

Useful Links

CNESST

Toolkit for the School system

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Pages/toolkit-school-system.aspx>

QPAT website

<https://qpat-apeq.qc.ca/covid-19/>