



Guidelines for the creation of a contingency plan by school service centres, school boards and private educational institutions for potential interruptions of services

CONTINGENCY PLAN

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Coordination and content

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Lignes directrices pour l'élaboration du plan de contingence par les centres de services scolaires, les commissions scolaires et les établissements d'enseignement privés en lien avec d'éventuels bris de services

English version

Services linguistiques en anglais

Direction du soutien au réseau éducatif anglophone

Ministère de l'Éducation

For further information, contact:

General information

Ministère de l'Éducation

1035, rue De La Chevrotière, 27^e étage

Québec (Québec) G1R 5A5

Telephone: 418-643-7095

Toll-free: 1-866-747-6626

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Introduction

Given the current context of the pandemic, the significant contagiousness of the Omicron variant and the new directives regarding self-isolation,¹ the Ministère and the school network are predicting that a large number of staff members in all positions will be required to isolate for several days in the coming weeks. This situation may lead to interruptions in services at some institutions or reduce the ability of daycare services to be provided as they currently are.

The basic premise of this planning is to ensure that students will not be required to isolate at home due to a lack of staff. On January 5, the Minister reiterated his wish that students be able to benefit from the best learning environment possible. As such, the goal is to keep students safely present in school, despite the high level of absences predicted for school staff.

The goal of this process is to provide guidance to the school network to ensure that each educational organization is provided with a contingency plan in order to avoid the worst outcomes and continue to meet the obligation to provide services to students in Québec. This plan would come into force once the staff replacement mechanisms provided in the collective agreements can no longer be used due to lack of resources, while allowing school service centres and schools boards (SSC/SB) to plan the organization of work based on the realities and needs of their educational institutions.

¹ [Self-isolation \(COVID-19\)](#)

Current measures

The guidelines governing topics such as self-isolation, vaccination status and remuneration, applicable to staff based on their specific circumstances, are provided in the [Directives for educational institutions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) document, which is available on the Québec.ca website.

Staff who are self-isolating must work remotely, unless the tasks required by their position do not allow them to do so and no other tasks that can be completed remotely can be assigned to them.

Note also that the government has issued several orders-in-council and ministerial orders that provide flexibility to the school network in the current health emergency. These orders are in force for as long as the health emergency continues:

1. [Ministerial Order 2020-008](#)

Among other provisions, this order allows school staff to be assigned to positions where and when they are needed. This provides significant flexibility in the context of a health emergency. This order stipulates that the relevant unions and professional associations are to be consulted before this measure is applied, unless the urgency of the situation makes this impossible.

2. [Order-in-Council 964-2020](#)

Allows any person holding a teaching licence who has retired from the education network since July 1, 2015, and who returns to work to provide preschool education or teach at the elementary or secondary level (as an occasional substitute teacher) be remunerated in accordance with, as the case may be, the scale or pay scale applicable to teaching personnel in the national collective agreements in force. This order will encourage retired staff from the network to provide assistance to current employees.

The Ministère encourages educational organizations to share this order within their networks.

3. [Order-in-Council 943-2020](#)

Allows remote educational services to be provided to students in the following situations:

1. Students whose health condition or that of a person with whom they reside puts them at risk of serious complications if they contract COVID-19, where a physician recommends that they not attend school
2. Students whose class is the subject of a recommendation or isolation order from a public health authority issued because of a COVID-19 case involving an employee or student at the educational institution concerned, and in that case, be provided as of no later than two days after the recommendation or order is issued

Ministerial guidelines

School service centres and school boards must ensure that each of the **preliminary measures** is completed for each institution.

For teaching staff

1. Identify **resource persons**

- In the school
E.g. Teaching staff who have been released from their duties to perform other work (mentor teachers, resource teachers, etc.), professional staff (with priority given to holders of teaching licenses), support staff, students in education programs or programs related to teaching
- Outside of the school²
E.g. External organizations (such as Alloprof) or parent volunteers (the Ministère encourages educational organizations to promote this in their community) who are able to support students learning in class while their teacher is not physically present, if necessary

In this case, the qualifications and skills of these individuals must be assessed and taken into consideration when responsibilities are assigned to them, especially when being given responsibility for a group (e.g. supervising a group versus teaching a group)

2. Identify **groups to prioritize for support**

E.g. Students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, students enrolled in regional or supraregional schooling services, students in Elementary Cycle One as a higher priority than those in Elementary Cycle Three, etc., as well as specific actions and levels of support to provide to these students in particular

3. Identify **complementary services** at the school, SSC or SB level that can be temporarily suspended in order to allow these resources to be assigned to teaching or supporting a group of students (e.g. services provided by education consultants, remedial education professionals, speech therapists, pedagogical support staff) and release of portions of the teaching task³ (e.g. serving as a resource teacher, mentoring, school projects or coordination of programs) in order to potentially proceed to the “easing”⁴ of services

² Judicial records must be verified for any person asked to work with children.

³ If the teaching task is modified after October 15, the teacher must agree to the change.

If the MEQ wishes to allow unilateral modification of the teaching task when necessary, a ministerial order or order-in-council would be necessary to set aside provisions of the collective agreements.

⁴ Note that this does not refer to the removal of any *subjects* from the schedule, as this would run counter to the *Basic school regulation*.

4. Analyze the feasibility of planning for **modified school organization** by:
 - referring to the current measures relevant to the creation of groups of students as set out in the provincial collective agreements. These regulations state that no group of students can be larger than the indicated maximum, unless, among other circumstances, there is a shortage of qualified available staff.⁵ For example, a teacher who monitors their standard group as well as several students from another group, with the help of another staff member if possible.
 - combining some groups of students. For example, a teacher can take charge of more than one group of students, with the help of another person. Ideally, students would remain in two separate classrooms in order to reduce the risk of contagion. The two people (teacher and additional person) move from one room to the other.
 - This modified school organization must be determined based on the provincial collective agreements in force, after discussion with the unions if possible, or based on Ministerial Order 2020-008.

School service centres and school boards can implement the **following measures** for each institution.

For teaching staff

1. Optimum use of the replacement methods and use of the identified resource persons
2. Remote teaching by a teacher who is self-isolating but is able to work with their group of students while an adult is present in the classroom to support and supervise the group

Note: If the teacher of a special education class is self-isolating and is able to work, it is preferred, depending on the specific situation, that this teacher's class still be taught in person by a legally qualified teacher for as long as possible. The teacher normally responsible for this class can be assigned other tasks while in isolation or provide remote support to the teacher who is present with the class.

3. Remote teaching for the entire class if necessary and in exceptional situations

⁵ Clause 8-8.01 C (FSE-CSQ, FAE)

For school daycare staff

1. Identify resource persons in the school (volunteers or not, under Ministerial Order 2020-008) or outside of the school⁶ (e.g. parent volunteers) who can be responsible for children at the daycare service.
2. Identify groups to be provided with priority support⁷ (e.g. students in Elementary Cycle One, students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties).
3. Identify operating hours (e.g. morning, lunch or evening) with the goal of eventually reducing the services provided, and identify the potential effects on school transportation.

For students

1. For students who are in self-isolation, work to complete at home must be provided by teachers for the self-isolation period.

⁶ Judicial records must be verified for any person asked to work with children.

⁷ Refunds should be planned.

