

TRANSLATION

October 5, 2020

Dear parents:

We are writing to you today to advise you of a significant reinforcement of existing health measures and the application of a series of additional measures for educational institutions located in red zones.

We know that the current situation is difficult for you and for your children. We must nevertheless make the necessary decisions that will enable us to keep schools open and allow our young people to continue to build their potential and to socialize.

Note that even when a region transitions into a red zone, educational services will continue to be offered there, unless otherwise specified by the public health authorities. As of October 8, the following measures will apply in red zones:

- Students will remain in a single stable class group, without any physical distancing required between students within that group.
- There will be assigned seating on school buses, with one student per bench wherever possible. All students in Elementary 5 through Secondary V must continue to wear a face covering on school buses.
- Special pedagogical projects, such as Sports-études and Arts-études programs, will continue only within a stable class group. If it is necessary for students from different groups to come together, a 2-metre physical distance must be maintained between these students at all times. No group activities may be carried out while students are gathered together. Matches, games and competitions will not be permitted.
- Lunch can be eaten in the classroom or in the cafeteria, with a 2-metre physical distance between stable class groups.
- Professional services (e.g. remedial education) can continue to be offered to students either individually or in groups of no more than six students. If any of these six students come from different class groups, a 2-metre physical distance is required.
- From now on, school staff members must wear a procedural mask in common areas, in staff rooms and outside on school grounds.
- All extracurricular activities and educational field trips are suspended.

Measures specific to elementary school

- Daycare services will be offered in stable class groups or subgroups, separated by a 2-metre distance and/or physical barriers.

Measures specific to secondary school

- From now on, students will be required to wear a face covering as soon as they arrive on school grounds. This new measure is being put in place to make young people more mindful of physical distancing measures and public health rules.
- In addition, face coverings are now compulsory when students are in the classroom. However, the face covering may be removed in the following circumstances:
 - When a student is seated and eating or drinking.
 - When a student is in Physical Education and Health class and is maintaining a 2-metre physical distance from others.
 - When a student reports having a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering.
 - When a student is receiving care, obtaining a service or practising a physical activity that requires them to remove their face covering, in which case they can remove it for the duration of the care, service or activity.
- Secondary IV and V students will now attend class every second day. They will follow their regular schedule, but alternate between in-person and online classes. This approach is intended to ensure the continuation of their learning.
- It may happen that students who are taking optional courses required for admission to college do not all belong to the same stable class group. In this case, they must wear a face covering and the 2-metre physical distancing rule must be maintained at all times. Alternatively, these courses may be offered through distance education.

There will be an increased police presence near secondary schools to raise awareness among students and encourage them to disperse when necessary.

All these measures will come into effect in red zones on Thursday, October 8, and will remain in effect until at least October 28, at which time the situation will be re-evaluated.

A few weeks ago, we took an important step in enabling your children to return to class in a safe environment. Now, we are at a new stage and we must not lower our guard. More than ever before, it is essential that we work together in the interests of our young people.

We are counting on your collaboration in making your children aware of the need to respect the measures we have announced to you today. It is crucial that we all do our part to help ensure that students can attend school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As parents, your commitment and collaboration make all the difference and, for that, we thank you most sincerely.

[Original signed by]

Jean-François Roberge
Minister of Education

[Original signed by]

Isabelle Charest
Minister for Education and
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Women