

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

June 8, 2020

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – REOPENING

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CONTEXT

This document is intended to answer questions submitted from the network in response to the announcement that elementary schools and vocational training centres will reopen and that distance learning will continue for the rest of the school network. This tool will be updated regularly. The responses provided in this document are intended as ministerial guidelines for returning to class and continuing the school year. A guide published by the CNESST is also available to answer questions.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. **What is the procedure for responding to a suspected case of COVID-19 (student or other individual)?**

When staff or students show symptoms that may suggest COVID-19 (fever, cough, breathing difficulties, loss of sense of smell, or other symptoms), they must be isolated in a room designated for this purpose.

An emergency kit that is ready to be used in a COVID-19 situation, containing masks, gloves, eye protection, a resealable bag and a smock (gown) as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, must be available in schools. Schools must follow the directives and recommendations issued by the public health authorities.

2. **What is the procedure for responding to a confirmed case of COVID-19?**

The health and safety of students and staff is the first priority. No person (student or school staff member) contaminated by COVID-19 will be allowed at school until all the following criteria have been met:

- A period of at least 14 days has passed since the beginning of the acute phase of the illness
- No acute symptoms for the past 24 hours (excluding a residual cough, which could linger)
- No fever for 48 hours (without taking fever-reducing medication)

If the person is a student, pedagogical support will be offered during this period. Schools must follow the directives and recommendations issued by the public health authorities.

3. **Will there be COVID-19 screening tests in schools?**

No. Just like any citizen with symptoms of COVID-19, students must stay home and seek health advice. A good reference source is the COVID-19 Self-care Guide (<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-002492>), provides instructions on what to do. Information about the steps to follow, including how to determine if you need to take a test, is also available at Québec.ca (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>).

4. **Is access to science laboratories permitted?**

In order to limit the circulation of people within schools and reduce the risk of contamination, laboratories will remain closed, along with libraries.

5. **Will the pedagogical days indicated on the school calendar still take place?**

The school calendar for the current year is managed by each school board. Pedagogical days and their cancellation, if necessary, are managed at the local level.

6. **Should we pay artists as part of the *Culture in the Schools* program even if the activity did not take place? Should we pay an artist as part of the *Schools Host an Artist* program for workshops that did not take place?**

The directive sent to school boards and accredited, subsidized private schools on April 9 addressed the contractual agreements concluded with an organization appearing in the Répertoire culture-éducation for any cultural activities or outings that are fully or partially covered by ministerial funds, regardless of the budget measure. You are asked to honour the payment of these funds as provided for in the contract as though the services were fully rendered, equal to the ministerial allocation granted for the activity. This directive now extends to the period ending June 30, 2020.

7. **What is the procedure for responding to a case where a family member or friend residing at the same address as a student or staff member is awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test, has tested positive for COVID-19 or is undergoing 14 days of isolation after moderate- to severe-risk contact with an individual with COVID-19?**

Staff should be made aware of the importance of not reporting to school if there is any risk that they have contracted, or come into contact with an individual who has contracted, COVID-19. Parent should also refrain from sending their children to school under the same circumstances. During its investigation, the Direction de la santé publique will issue recommendations that members of a household will be obliged to follow.

To ensure a safe return to school, the measures detailed in the [CNESST guide](#) must be implemented.

8. **Is a municipal library permitted to open if it is located within a school but has its own independent entrance?**

Yes, a municipal library can open if it has an independent entrance. However, the competent authorities must see to the conditions allowing for access to the library, as set out by the public health authorities and the CNESST (<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Documents/DC100-2163A-Guide-Museum-Library.pdf>). Moreover, indoor access to the library from rooms used by educational services must remain closed to ensure that health and physical distancing measures are followed.

DAYCARE SERVICES

9. **[MODIFIED] Until what date will the emergency daycare services remain open?**

Emergency daycare services closed on May 13, 2020, except in the territory of the Montréal metropolitan community and the territory of the regional county municipality of Joliette, where they will continue to operate until June 19, 2020, for parents who are entitled to them. This may be subject to future decisions.

10. **What are the opening hours of the daycare centres?**

Emergency daycare centres are open from 7:00 a.m. To 6:00 p.m.

11. What is the educator-child ratio in emergency school daycare services?

In emergency daycare centres in schools, the planned ratio is 10 children per educator.

12. What is the educator-child ratio in regular school daycare services?

A maximum of 15 children per educator will be permitted.

13. Can children use the daycare services even if they were not registered at the start of the school year?

Since schools reopened, school daycare services have resumed their usual activities for the students enrolled there. Any family with children enrolled at a school can register for that school's daycare services by following the standard procedures.

14. Given the significant variation in the number of children in daycare subgroups during the morning and afternoon periods, can we gather several subgroups in the same space, so long as there are no more than 15 students per group?

The guidelines issued by the public health authorities aim to limit the number of individuals (children and school staff) who may be in close contact. For this reason, children attending school daycare services in the Montréal metropolitan community must remain in the same subgroup, even if these subgroups sometimes consist of only a few students. In light of the situation in schools in regions outside the Montréal metropolitan community, a maximum of two subgroups can share the same space, provided that there are no more than 15 students per a group and the physical distancing rule is followed. As much as possible, the groups should always be the same in order to limit contact between different students and school daycare service educators.

15. Do all private school personnel have access to emergency daycare services for their children? If so, starting when?

Emergency daycare services have been available to all private school personnel since May 4, 2020. Parents who would like to send their children to these centres must use the online registration form available at <https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/emergency-daycare-services/>.

16. What should be the hourly rate for personnel assigned to emergency school daycare services?

Educators assigned to emergency daycare services must work at the rate provided for in the collective agreements.

Ministerial Order 2020-008 states that sections of provincial, regional and local collective agreements related to work schedules are modified to meet the needs of employers.

In the collective agreement, work schedule can refer to the work day or the standard work week. However, the ministerial order modifies the work schedule in its strictest sense, meaning the division of hours of work. Salaried staff can therefore be asked to work regardless of their standard schedule. However, the measures related to the number of hours that make up the normal work day or work week have not been modified.

In general, the collective agreements state that, for daycare staff, measures related to additional hours apply outside of the opening hours of the childcare service or above 35 hours per week.

For example, a childcare educator works 5 hours per day (25 hours per week). They have been working in an emergency daycare service for 8 hours per day (40 hours per week).

They will be paid:

- 35 hours per week at regular time
- 5 hours per week at time and a half

Personnel from other job categories assigned to emergency daycare services should receive the amount they are usually paid, on the basis of their position and status, and for the number of hours provided for in their employment contract. Additional hours are paid at the rate of childcare educators based on the provisions related to additional hours that apply to salaried workers providing childcare services.

For example, a special education technician (SET) works 5 hours per day (25 hours per week). Since Monday, they have been working a 40-hour week at an emergency daycare.

They will be paid:

- 25 hours per week at regular time as a SET
- 10 hours per week at regular time as a childcare educator
- 5 hours per week at time and a half as a childcare educator

17. What should be the hourly rate for personnel from other job categories who offer to work in emergency daycare services?

Personnel from other job categories assigned to emergency daycare services should receive the amount they are usually paid, on the basis of their position and status, and for the number of hours provided for in their employment contract. However, additional hours are paid at the rate of childcare educators based on the provisions related to additional hours that apply to salaried workers providing childcare services.

For example, a special education technician (SET) works 5 hours per day (25 hours per week). Since Monday, they have been working a 40-hour week at an emergency daycare.

They will be paid:

- 25 hours per week at regular time as a SET
- 10 hours per week at regular time as a childcare educator
- 5 hours per week at time and a half as a childcare educator

18. In light of the current situation, are we required to offer daycare services during our end-of-year pedagogical days?

The school board and each school's governing board may agree to offer daycare services during planned pedagogical days. This is a local decision.

SCHEDULE

19. How can students be prevented from returning to school at random times and thus making it difficult to foster group stability and learning?

Parents must inform the school about their children's planned return one week in advance.

20. Can the regular school schedule be modified to deal with the organization of educational services while elementary schools are reopening?

Elementary schools are allowed to adapt their schedules by having students arrive and leave at different times.

21. Will the daily schedule be flexible to allow for better rotation of groups?

Elementary schools are allowed to adapt their schedules by having students arrive and leave at different times.

22. How flexible will MEES be with regard to an increase in hours in the students' timetable to allow students to accelerate their academic path?

Timetables and the time allotted for pedagogical support services required based on students' needs are managed locally in accordance with the collective agreements in effect.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENTS OR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

23. Will multidisciplinary teams be created to find solutions for the potential issues caused by physical distancing for students with disabilities or students who require close-contact interventions?

Following the announcement that kindergartens, elementary schools and vocational training centres are reopening, school teams and centre teams had several days to prepare for students to return to class. Each school is responsible for implementing its own measures and organizing services based on its context and the needs of its students. The present situation calls for flexibility and solutions adapted to different student populations and educational realities.

24. What services are being offered to students with disabilities, social maladjustments or learning difficulties?

Schools will make adjustments for students who were experiencing learning difficulties before the closure of schools and for students whose learning was particularly affected by the sudden ending of classes. The level of intervention will be adjusted based on the situation of each student involved.

The Ministère asks that students be contacted frequently not only by teachers, but also by specialists, as needed. All members of the school team (teachers, non-teaching professionals and support staff) must work together to support students, especially those who are most vulnerable. School staff must remain available to answer students' questions and meet their needs. Any students who were receiving professional services must continue to do so. Teachers must provide students with a weekly work plan to allow them to establish a schedule and structure their work.

The Ministère launched the Open School platform (ecoleouverte.ca/en) to offer educational activities to all Québec students regardless of their situation or difficulties. The "Parents" section of this platform is intended to help support parents of children with special needs by providing strategies and tips to use at home. The platform also proposes activities for students with more specific needs, such as activities in Québec sign language (langue des signes québécoises, LSQ) or activities for students with an intellectual disability. The government also concluded an agreement with Télé-Québec to develop new educational television shows to guide students' learning.

25. Are individualized education plans (IEPs) being taken into account and revised, if necessary, considering the situation?

School administrations, with help from their teams, can identify the IEPs that need to be revised so that they can be adjusted based on the needs of the students. Various measures in the IEP can be implemented, whether the student returns to school or is distance learning.

26. How can the most vulnerable students be encouraged to return to school?

Pedagogical support and complementary services are offered to encourage the most vulnerable students to return to school. When organizing these services, the realities and needs of all students, both at school and at home, must be taken into account. The main priority must be to encourage the return to a safe climate at school to meet all students' need for safety, especially vulnerable students. School teams are asked to consider the individual situations of vulnerable students when creating the small groups of 15 students. Given that some students will remain at home, it is also essential to maintain strong connections with vulnerable students so as to provide them with the same vigilance and offer them a supportive framework, regardless of distance.

27. Does the return of students to school also apply to specialized classes and to schools that offer recognized regional or supraregional schooling services to students with severe disabilities or behavioural issues?

Public schools that offer regional or supraregional schooling services as well as the private schools specialized in special education were permitted to reopen in cold zones as of May 11, gradually and based on the needs and capacity to accommodate students with severe disabilities or behavioural issues. Of course, students must not be experiencing any symptoms associated with COVID-19 or be in a vulnerable state of health that could be worsened by coming out of isolation. In the territory of the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette, these schools will open on June 1.

The return to school for these students, who cannot stay unsupervised at home, will not only allow them to consolidate their learning and socialize, but will also provide some respite for their parents.

28. Can social services personnel meet with students at school?

Yes, social services personnel are permitted to meet with a student at school if the staff member's physical presence is important to the quality of the service provided to the child. However, personnel are asked to limit their trips to schools. For example, they are encouraged to meet with more than one student, if possible, when they visit a school. Furthermore, they must follow all health measures recommended by their employer and conform to the requirements of the education and health networks (maintain physical distance, wash hands, etc.).

In addition, health and social services personnel are advised to explore ways to offer certain services from a distance or through close collaboration with school staff, as long as the intervention option is not detrimental to the student who requires services.

Indeed, it is important for health and social services personnel to meet with students when necessary and to ensure their well-being, their safety and their optimal development.

29. **We have received requests for home instruction services for certain students whose doctors recommend that they not return to school. What services can be provided to students with cognitive and motor limitations who cannot use distance learning services?**

The guidelines provided by public health authorities do not allow school staff to travel to provide education services at students' homes.

30. **Are specialists available to support students at home?**

School staff must provide education services, including professional services, to support all students, even providing distance services to those who stay home.

31. **Under what conditions can students attending a CFER return to school?**

As of May 25, 2020, the training and recovery business centres (Centres de formation en entreprise et récupération, CFER) that offer prework training were permitted to resume their activities. In response to the school network's concerns regarding the risks of spreading COVID-19, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité au travail (CNESST) published a guide for the school environment. This guide was developed in collaboration with the labour associations and the employers' associations, which made it possible to identify the steps to take in the schools to ensure the safety of staff and students and to minimize the spread of COVID-19. It should also serve as a reference for the school reorganization process currently in progress. Employers must identify the risks of spreading COVID-19 in the workplace. They should aim to reduce and control these risks, if not eliminate them entirely.

Training in a CFER mainly provides practical learning that cannot be offered remotely. Students who attend a CFER often have learning difficulties or social maladjustments and require personalized academic support from the teachers who have played a meaningful role in their educational path. Students who were in their last year of study will be able to obtain their certification.

32. **[NEW] In his correspondence of May 29, the Minister announced that educational activities for secondary school students enrolled in Pework Training or Training for a Semiskilled Trade would resume starting June 1, 2020. Given that the TST program dedicates a large number of hours to practicums in the workplace, are students' practicum-related activities also allowed to resume?**

The practical training (practicum) is at the core of the Pework Training (PT) and the Training for a Semiskilled Trade (TST) programs. Students may resume their practicum if their employer is following the recommendations issued by the Direction nationale de la santé publique and is able to provide the protective equipment necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Other students, who are unable to return to their workplaces under the above conditions, may return to the classroom to receive educational support services and continue their general training.

The *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education* has been amended for the 2019-2020 school year. With regard to the certification process for students in the PT and TST programs, the regulation now provides for the following:

- 33. On the recommendation of the school board, the Minister shall award a pre-work training certificate to every student who has completed the training of not less than 2,350 hours [instead of 2,700 hours] and has successfully completed the work skills education program of not less than 600 hours [instead of 900 hours] apportioned as follows: 300 hours for the 2018-2019 school year and not less than 300 hours for the 2019-2020 school year.

- 33.1. On the recommendation of the school board, the Minister shall award a training certificate for a semi-skilled trade, with mention of the trade, to every student who has completed the training of not less than 550 hours [instead of 900 hours] and has successfully completed the practical training component for the semi-skilled trade of not less than 250 hours [instead of 450 hours].

On the recommendation of the school board, the Minister shall also award a training certificate for a semi-skilled trade, with mention of the semi-skilled trade, to every student referred to in the third paragraph of section 23.4 if the student

- (1) has completed the pre-work training of not less than 2,350 hours [instead of 2,700 hours]; and
- (2) has successfully completed the practical training component of the training leading to a semi-skilled trade of a duration of not less than 250 hours [instead of 450 hours].

STUDENT HEALTH

33. Do students have access to specialists' services?

Improved support services are provided by the Ministère to the stakeholders within school boards who are responsible for promoting healthy lifestyles, in order to assist with the wider promotion of positive mental health and prevention of specific problems such as anxiety. The professionals present in schools can offer the necessary services to students showing signs of anxiety or distress.

34. What measures will be implemented to detect any symptoms that students may have?

Please consult the following document for more information about contact and isolation: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2902-gestion-cas-contacts-communaute-covid19.pdf>

35. [NEW] Should we take a child's temperature by mouth?

The taking of temperatures is not recommended as a form of triage when children enter school buildings.

- In the case of children aged 2 to 5, the temperature can be taken in the ear or under the armpit.
- In the case of children aged 5 and older, the temperature can be taken in the ear, under the armpit, or in the mouth (for an accurate reading).
- The rectal method for taking a temperature is not recommended in a school setting.

The website below contains recommendations by the Canadian Paediatric Society concerning fever and the taking of children's temperature. It provides useful methods and instructions, as well as information on how to interpret a reading based on the method used for taking a temperature.

https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/fever_and_temperature_taking

HEALTH MEASURES

36. Do school staff need to wear masks?

Procedure masks will be provided for school staff working in specialized classes. Masks will also be provided to school staff working in preschool classes, as the interventions require closer contact and it is difficult to constantly maintain 2 metres of distance from students of this age.

The public health authorities do not currently recommend that all school staff be provided with protective masks. Essentially, the strict hygiene measures that are being implemented in schools, the details of which have been provided in previous communications, will ensure the health and safety of school staff. That being said, the Ministère is aware that some members of staff who are in prolonged contact with students, have concerns about this matter, and that wearing reusable masks may reassure them.

Funds have been provided for school boards to allow them to provide reusable masks to staff members who request them.

More details about protective and disinfecting equipment that have been provided to school staff to ensure their safety can be found in the [CNESST guide](#).

37. With regard to obtaining supplies of certain products related to the pandemic, is it possible to relax some of the requirements under the Act respecting contracting by public bodies?

The Ministère is currently in discussions with Collecto and the school boards in order to plan the purchase of required equipment.

38. Will disinfectant be provided for students and staff on-site?

Yes. The Ministère is currently working with the public health authorities to determine what supplies are needed for the reopening and is in discussions with Collecto and school boards to plan the purchase of the required equipment.

39. What are the recommended measures for arranging staff rooms in order to respect physical distancing?

School boards are responsible for the physical organization of the rooms, provided they respect the 2-metre distancing rule recommended by the public health authorities.

40. How is the handwashing period organized?

The school team is responsible for implementing all the recommendations issued by the public health authorities. Students are required to wash their hands at least four times per day: when they arrive at school, before and after lunch, and before they leave the school. Details on this subject are provided in the CNESST guide.

41. What are the instructions for cleaning the building (offices, bathrooms, etc.)?

The school team is responsible for implementing all the recommendations issued by the public health authorities. Details on this subject are provided in the [CNESST guide](#).

42. What is the hygiene protocol for handling documents, teaching materials, games?

The CNESST guide specifies that sharing of tools and materials must be restricted. When shared objects are used, they must be cleaned after each use.

43. What is the maintenance protocol for each area frequented by students and staff?

Details on this subject are provided in the [CNESST guide](#).

44. Do library staff have to wear gloves and a mask, disinfect all the books and quarantine them for four or five days after they disinfect them?

In order to limit the circulation of people within schools and reduce the risk of contamination, libraries remain closed, along with laboratories. Details on this subject are provided in the [CNESST guide](#).

45. Are parents allowed to enter the school?

No. Parents and other visitors are not allowed inside the school.

46. Is there a video available to explain how to properly use protective masks?

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux has created a post on how to make and properly use a mask:

https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/sante/documents/Problemes_de_sante/covid-19/Couvre-visage/20-210-64W_couvre-visage-anglais.pdf?1588798488

For more information and to watch a video about wearing masks, go to the following page on the Québec.ca website: <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/#c57467>

47. Have the directives regarding items purchased by parents (boxes of tissues, headphones, recorders) changed in order to limit the physical handling of these objects?

The directives have not changed. Materials (recorders, boxes of tissues, headphones) are part of the materials that must be provided for free and therefore, schools cannot charge fees, as stated in the *Regulation respecting free instructional material* and certain financial contributions that may be required. Schools must ensure that they offer these materials to students while respecting the health and safety rules.

48. Must drinking water fountains be disinfected?

For specific details with regard to the disinfection of drinking water fountains in schools, please consult the information on surface cleaning provided by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec at <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/covid-19/environment/surface-cleaning>.

The CNESST has also posted a daily checklist for the school environment, including the cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, taps, toilets, telephones, electronic devices). These must be cleaned every shift.

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

49. Adult learners writing ministerial examinations may need to use dictionaries. Should we forbid the use of dictionaries or disinfect them?

It is important to insist that adult learners disinfect their hands and their reference materials. They can be encouraged to bring their own reference materials, provided these tools are permitted for writing an examination.

50. **Are there any specific precautions to be taken for handling paper when administering examinations in adult general education, since paper cannot be disinfected like other ordinary items?**

The handling of paper and handing off of it from one individual to another must be limited. However, in this specific case, the handling of paper may be authorized provided that hands are frequently washed and the respiratory protocol is followed. Teachers may also be encouraged to wear gloves and a mask when handling examinations written by students on paper.

51. **[MODIFIED] What ratio will apply on pedagogical days in daycare services?**

Once regular daycare services resume, a maximum of 15 children per group will be permitted. This guideline also applies to pedagogical days. When not using outdoor spaces, students should remain in the room assigned to their group.

52. **What should be done if a student has irritated skin, an allergic reaction or an inflammatory response to coating their hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, such as Purell® or Bacti Control®?**

If a student has irritated skin, an allergic reaction or an inflammatory response to coating their hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, they should stop using that product. Instead, have them wash their hands with soap and water. Frequently washing your hands and applying an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can lead to dry skin, which can be prevented by the recommended daily use of moisturizing hand lotion. Consult a physician if these skin irritations or reactions persist.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

53. **What if we have difficulty organizing the classrooms according to the standards required by the public health authorities?**

If the rooms normally used by classes seem too small to accommodate a maximum of 15 students while respecting the recommendation of 2 metres of physical distancing between them, the furniture must be moved around and the room reconfigured to make optimum use of the space. You can also consider using other areas in the school or elsewhere, including secondary schools.

54. **Are parents who work in the healthcare sector included in plans for the return to school?**

Yes. Children of health care personnel attended emergency school daycare centres and there is nothing to indicate that this had a negative impact on the curve of the pandemic.

55. **Can students be refused in order to leave space to accommodate students with difficulties?**

Vulnerable students are encouraged to return to class as soon as possible so that they can benefit from the best pedagogical support, but no child will be refused.

56. **How are mealtimes organized?**

As much as possible, students remain in one room throughout the day, and this is where pedagogical support activities, lunchtime and school daycare services also take place.

57. **[MODIFIED] How are recesses organized?**

When they arrive at school or during recess, the students must remain in their groups (maximum of 15 students) and not start to play with other groups. It is now permitted to use playground equipment.

58. Will extracurricular activities resume?

Extracurricular activities are suspended in order to avoid non-essential gatherings.

59. Do children have to eat cold lunches, as was the case in the emergency school daycare centres?

In order to limit the circulation of people within schools, students have to bring their own lunch (cold or kept hot in a thermos). The Breakfast Club has resumed its activities.

60. What is the ratio for preschool? Has a ratio been provided for each school?

The ratio planned for preschool and elementary education is a maximum of 15 students per group, while respecting the 2-metre distance between each person, as much as possible. The school administration is responsible for evaluating building capacity based on the available space.

61. Can 1 or 2 students be added to the maximum number of 15 students per group if there is strict adherence to the physical distancing rule of keeping 2 metres between students?

We have consulted the public health authorities on this matter, specifically with regard to the possibility of a group made up of a teacher and 16 or 17 students. Although the maximum ratio of 15 students per group and physical distancing must be respected, an exception could possibly be made to allow the addition of one or two extra students to a room, provided that the following criteria are met:

- The space must be larger than a regular classroom and it must allow for everyone, including the new group members, to be 2 metres apart.
- This solution must be viewed as a last resort to avoid moving part of the group to another school or centre.
- The school or centre must have already obtained the school board's permission to resort to this exceptional measure.

62. Could more than one group of 15 students share a very large space?

The concentration of people in the same closed space must be limited. As a first resort and weather permitting, using outdoor spaces should be encouraged, even for educational activities. On an exceptional basis and provided that there is no other alternative, more than one group could share a very large space (e.g. a double gymnasium), provided the following measures are implemented:

- Physical distancing of 2 meters must be respected at all times.
- The groups must be separated by a physical barrier (e.g. a moveable partition).
- There must be no travel between the groups.

63. Can a student or staff member with symptoms of the flu go to school?

No. It is prohibited for anyone (preschool or elementary school students or staff members) with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, breathing difficulties, sudden loss of sense of smell or taste, other symptoms listed by the government) to be on school grounds until they have been symptom-free for 24 to 48 hours. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, as listed at <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/general-information-about-coronavirus/>, must immediately leave school premises, call 1-877-644-4545 and follow the instructions they are given.

64. **[MODIFIED] Can the schools be used for municipal day camps?**

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur encourages school boards to make their facilities available for summer day camp activities. Note, however, that any sharing of infrastructure must not interfere with school boards' regular summer projects, particularly renovation and educational activities. The Ministère has earmarked funds to cover any costs associated with this sharing of infrastructure.

65. **What steps should be taken if a student does not follow the physical distancing rule?**

Steps for maintaining physical distance are to be determined and taken locally based on the local situation and public health guidelines. The school administration is responsible for establishing and applying measures to maintain a safe environment for students and school staff.

66. **[MODIFIED] We are receiving numerous requests from municipalities to use our school facilities for day camps. Will the Ministère permit us to open the doors of our schools to the public when existing agreements concerning the use of the facilities were suspended?**

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur encourages school boards to make their facilities available for summer day camp activities. Note, however, that any sharing of infrastructure must not interfere with school boards' regular summer projects, particularly renovation and educational activities. The Ministère has earmarked funds to cover any costs associated with this sharing of infrastructure.

67. **Through partnership agreements, we have many municipal libraries in our elementary schools. Does the announcement concerning access to libraries as of May 29 include those located in elementary schools?**

The sharing of infrastructure falls under the responsibility of the school boards. Therefore, it is their duty to follow up on these requests in accordance with the physical distancing rules established by the public health authorities.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

68. **If the teacher is with students in the classroom, who will support the students who remain at home?**

The school team will implement a system that allows students in class and students at home to receive support. Students who are continuing to learn from home will receive a weekly work plan and will be contacted directly at least three times a week. More vulnerable students may be contacted more often. The Ministère has also made a commitment to support them. Teachers will receive training and measures will be implemented to allow students to retrieve their school books, notebooks and personal effects. In addition, students remaining at home who need technological tools will be able to borrow these tools so that they can continue learning during this exceptional period. Individuals with conditions that make them vulnerable to COVID-19 and require them to stay at home might be given this assignment.

69. **Is distance education being offered only to secondary school students?**

No. Distance education will continue at the elementary level. Personalized educational activities kits will still be sent, the Open School website will remain available and the arrangements with Télé-Québec will remain in force. Distance education will also be available to students enrolled in adult general education and in vocational training.

70. How can follow-up or courses be provided to elementary school students who remain at home?

One possible solution is to use the computer's camera to connect students at home with their classrooms so they can attend class at the same time as their classmates. Families will have to be notified in advance about certain classes that cover the basic subjects by using the educational activities kits sent each week.

How will children who are staying at home to protect a parent who is at risk due to a health condition be able to participate in class? The choice of methods, tools and activities for children who remain at home is at the professional discretion of each teacher. The pedagogical and professional support currently in place will be maintained and enhanced.

71. If we do not send our children to school, will the teachers send us material?

Yes. Elementary and secondary school students who remain at home will receive assignments to do and there will be weekly follow-ups carried out by teachers and multidisciplinary teams.

72. Considering that schooling is compulsory up to the age of 16 and "optional" after that, how can we make sure that our young people, especially those in secondary school, continue their studies?

All secondary school students can continue their learning at a distance and will benefit from enhanced and personalized pedagogical support. Schools will provide work plans each week and teachers will carry out regular follow-ups, daily if possible. As they are more autonomous and have a better grasp of technology, secondary school students require less assistance to follow their courses than do elementary school students, and it is easier for them to continue their learning online. The Ministère will also ensure that professional resources are available for secondary school students, even at a distance.

73. Parents who are working from home cannot necessarily manage their time in accordance with the government's plans. Mention is often made of doing activities with parents. Is it possible to add that it is important to communicate with a teacher via videoconference in order to carry out these activities?

All students, whether they are in preschool, elementary school or secondary school, who are continuing to learn at a distance will benefit from enhanced pedagogical support. Schools will provide work plans each week and teachers will carry out regular follow-ups, daily if possible. Although the choice of methods, tools and activities is at the professional discretion of each teacher, training will be offered to support them.

Parents of elementary school students who believe that it is better to keep schooling their children at home should follow up on the assignments provided by the teacher or the school.

74. Can elementary school students obtain technological tools if their parents choose to have them remain at home?

To ensure that students, no matter what their situation, can finish acquiring essential learning before the end of the school year and are quickly equipped to do so, school boards are to lend the technological tools they have available to all students and staff of elementary and secondary schools who need them.

The Ministère has also reserved 15 000 LTE iPads from Apple and they are now available to school boards who wish to purchase them. Some suppliers who are already under contract will make devices equipped with cellular connection available. Lastly, Telus will be providing free cellular connection for these devices until June 30, 2020.

75. What support will new users of these 15 000 technological devices receive?

Technical support should be available locally in the school boards to assist teachers and possibly students (and their parents) in using information technology equipment and digital tools (software, platforms, etc.).

76. Will there be a limit to the number of students who have access to a free cellular connection?

No. There is no limit to the number of students who may have access to a free cellular connection, whether they borrow a tablet from the school board or acquire one through the government offer. The school boards are responsible for estimating needs in this regard.

77. Can teachers use Zoom as a web conferencing tool?

The use of Zoom is not prohibited, but teachers must use a reliable and secure version, meaning a version that was acquired properly, following the organization's current acquisition policies. The use of ZoomEnterprise is recommended. Using the free version of this product is not advised because the procedure for installing security patches is not always clear.

To improve the security of Zoom, a specific configuration is suggested:

- Activate the waiting room.
- Deactivate access to the meeting before the host arrives.
- Deactivate the ability for all participants to screenshare.
- Deactivate the ability for participants to record meetings.

78. Will the new technological tools be provided to vulnerable students first?

Schools have been asked to count the students who do not have the required equipment or an Internet connection allowing them to participate in the distance education activities provided by Québec teachers and to use the resources on the Open School platform. Schools are expected to give priority to vulnerable students or students with learning difficulties. The objective, however, is to ensure that all students have the equipment and an Internet connection allowing them to participate in the distance education activities provided by Québec teachers and to benefit from the resources on the Open School platform.

79. What is the deadline for ordering mobile devices?

There is no deadline for ordering mobile devices, whether from Apple or the other suppliers. Once orders are placed, the suppliers guarantee delivery within 7 to 10 business days. It has been agreed that the amount of time required for configuring these devices be reduced to the minimum so that students can obtain them as quickly as possible.

80. Will MEES publish guidelines on distance learning to support the school network?

Since the start of the pandemic, the Ministère has introduced digital tools and resources ([Open School](#) platform, educational kits, educational content on the Télé-Québec television channel and website) to support students in their learning and help them to succeed. On the [Open School](#) platform, the resources related to the development of digital competencies address the protection of students' privacy, among other things. Tools and resources are available to teachers to enable them to make choices, thereby respecting their professional autonomy. Training on distance learning is being offered by TÉLUQ, as is support by various network partners, including RÉCIT. Resources on digital citizenship are also proposed

on the [Open School](#) platform. Given the uncertainty within the education network caused by COVID-19, the Ministère is continuously reflecting on the best options to pursue. Committees comprising different education stakeholders have been formed and are currently working on issues concerning the education network.

81. For whom are the new teaching and learning resources offered by the Commission scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin intended?

Since May 21, 2020, teaching and learning resources offered by the Commission scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin have been available for public and private school teachers of Secondary Cycles One and Two who want to expand on their teaching and gain access to theoretical content and exercises they can share with their students.

82. How can teachers access the resources offered by the Commission scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin?

For an overview of the suggested resources, go to <https://ena.recitfad.com/> (available in French only). This site is the gateway for everything related to the Environnement numérique d'apprentissage (digital learning environment, ENA) and the available modules and training. For teachers to gain access to these educational resources, the respective school board or private school must first send the contact information of two persons responsible for online learning (one person for the pedagogical aspect and one person for the technical aspect) to the Service national du RÉCIT de la formation by email at info@recitfad.ca.

83. As a teacher, can I add learning content to the Environnement numérique d'apprentissage (digital learning environment, ENA)?

Yes, all teachers can add learning content to the ENA, if so desired.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

84. Is it possible to hold exams in person?

As long as the 2-metre physical distancing rule is respected, and considering that the primary goal is to allow students to complete their training, evaluation testing may be carried out provided that the basic conditions previously announced are met: a maximum of 15 students and appropriate health measures.

85. When can vocational training students resume their studies?

Distance learning must be the preferred approach whenever possible. For more technical activities that cannot be carried out online, training resumed on site in groups of a maximum of 15 students each as of May 11 outside the boundaries of the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette. The resumption of activities should prioritize groups nearing the end of their studies who are on track to receive their diplomas during the summer. Where a training centre is situated with respect to these boundaries is determined by its address, not the addresses where staff or students reside. The training centre teams are responsible for determining the rules that will apply in various situations with respect to each group (e.g. lunch period). The Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ) has also issued interim recommendations for applying sanitation measures on construction worksites. These measures could also be adapted for practical work as part of vocational training: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en/publications/2950-workers-contruction-site-covid19>

In the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette, training resumed on May 25 under the same terms and conditions as those that apply to centres in other regions. The resumption of activities involves all the training sectors.

86. Is it possible to hold computer labs in vocational training?

Yes, in groups of a maximum of 15 individuals who respect public health rules.

87. What will be done for students who do not wish to resume their training immediately?

These students may be granted a justified absence.

88. Will it be possible to start doing internships again?

Yes. Businesses are gradually opening their doors in step with the plan to relaunch the economy. In cases where it is not feasible to do an internship at this time, the order in which competencies are taught could be changed to allow students to keep progressing through their program until such time as it becomes possible to do an internship.

89. Can summer courses be offered in vocational training?

There are no plans to extend classes beyond the month of June. The distribution of working days within the work year is subject to agreements negotiated at the local or regional level, or local arrangements. School boards are advised to contact the local unions concerned to make new agreements.

90. The work-study program in vocational training requires that at least 20% of the time be spent in the workplace in order to receive funding. How can this be calculated, considering that students currently cannot enter the workforce, and will not be able to do so for some time?

At this moment, the calculation is made in the same way as planned in the operating budget rules for school boards.

91. Can the competencies covered during internships be carried out and evaluated?

Competencies covered during internships may be carried out and evaluated if the establishment hosting the internship is able to provide the required supervision and if the guidelines provided by the health authorities are respected.

92. Can students resume workplace internships in businesses that are open? If so, can teachers visit the internship sites or should supervision at a distance be favoured?

Internships can resume in businesses that are open, provided that public health rules are respected. Teachers must take the steps required to ensure that the students' learning is monitored and that they are evaluated. It is up to the teachers to determine the appropriate strategies for doing so (at the internship site or at a distance).

93. Can the Centres offer the training programs provided by the Business Services department?

Yes, Business Services staff may provide training in businesses where the resumption of activities has been allowed by the public health authorities.

94. Are activities pertaining to the recognition of acquired competencies (RAC) permitted?

Vocational training centres were permitted to reopen as of May 11 (May 25 for centres located in the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette) for the sole purpose of conducting evaluations. RAC evaluations may take place, provided that public health rules on physical distancing are respected.

95. What are MEES expectations with regard to the recognition of acquired competencies for health care programs of study?

MEES encourages vocational training centres to evaluate the learning students acquired while lending a hand in the health care network.

96. What is the situation with regard to the renegotiation of internships in the health care system?

This is a question of school organization that arises from collaboration between health care centres and vocational training centres. These institutions handle the requests for and the assignments of internships. In the context created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision to accept interns is up to the health care institutions and depends on their epidemiological situation, among other factors.

97. In the Increased Workplace Training Programs, the vocational training centres and participating companies are linked by partnership agreements. What will happen to students who no longer have a company to host them nor the remuneration that was announced to them? Are the centres obliged to provide training services for the period of time that should have been spent in a company? If so, will there be some type of financial compensation?

As much as possible, training courses are to continue in vocational training centres. Ministerial funding for training in the workplace is the same as that provided for training in educational institutions.

98. [NEW] How many students can be accommodated per group in the Health Care Facility Patient Service Support program (Skills Training Certificate)?

A group may include up to 22 students, provided a 2-metre physical distance between students is respected.

ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION

99. Can adult learners be evaluated in their adult education centre?

Adult learners can be admitted in groups of no more than 15 individuals to adult education centres to undergo local and ministerial evaluations as of May 11 (May 25 in the case of centres within the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette). Adult learners are asked to bring their own materials, including a dictionary. Adjustments in accordance with health measures may be made for oral evaluations, particularly those that are normally carried out in front of a group of people. For example, evaluations could be held online or in a smaller group.

100. [MODIFIED] In adult general education, is it possible for adult learners in semi-specialized trades to return to their practical training in workplace settings?

As of June 1, adult learners enrolled in Social Integration Services may resume their training. Practicums may resume in businesses that are open and that respect the guidelines issued by the public health

authorities. Teachers must take the necessary steps to monitor and evaluate students' learning. This may take place in the workplace or remotely, with appropriate strategies determined by the teachers.

101. [MODIFIED] Can the activities in the programs of study offered by the Social Integration Services and Sociovocational Integration Services resume under the same conditions as vocational training?

As of June 1, the activities in the programs of study offered by the Social Integration Services may resume, in groups of a maximum of 15 adult learners and provided the guidelines issued by the public health authorities are respected.

102. [MODIFIED] What happens in the case of adult learners who have only completed one week of their internship in sociovocational integration?

As of June 1, adult learners who had started a practicum in Social Integration Services may resume their activities. Practicums may resume in businesses that are open and that respect the guidelines issued by the public health authorities.

103. What are the special precautions to be taken with items that cannot be disinfected, such as paper?

The handling of paper and handing off of it from one individual to another must be limited. However, the handling of paper may be authorized provided that hands are frequently washed and the respiratory protocol is followed. Teachers are encouraged to wear gloves and a mask when handling examinations written by students on paper.

104. [MODIFIED] What are the Ministère's recommendations with regard to students with autism spectrum disorders who are over the age of 21?

As of June 1, access to adult education centres is permitted for groups of up to 15 adult learners enrolled in Social Integration and Sociovocational Services. Adult learners with autism spectrum disorders enrolled in one of these services may also resume their training.

105. [MODIFIED] Does the ministerial authorization implicitly allow adults to be accompanied in their in-person learning in laboratories? Is this at the discretion of adult education centres?

Adult education centres can administer evaluations in laboratories, provided that the rules established by the public health authorities are respected. Activities to prepare adult learners for evaluations may also resume in laboratories.

SUBJECTS

106. Will all subjects be taught?

Students will consolidate their learning and acquired competencies, whether at home or through pedagogical support services, and will complete the essential knowledge required to move up to the next level. The emphasis will be placed on the basic subjects listed in the Basic school regulation (languages, mathematics, history and science).

107. Will new competencies be taught between now and the end of the school year?

Efforts will be focused both on the consolidation of the acquired competencies and on the continued learning of essential knowledge. Emphasis will be placed on the core subjects provided for in the *Basic*

school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education (languages, mathematics, history and science).

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

108. Who has the right to school transportation?

Due to the health measure in effect, school transportation services are reduced to a minimum and major restrictions have been put in place in order to comply with the measures issued by public health authorities. However, service must be provided in such a way that all children can get to school. Children residing at the same address may sit together on the same seat because they are together at home anyways, provided that the rules for physical distancing from the other children are respected.

109. Is school transportation available at lunchtime?

No. There is no school transportation at lunchtime.

110. How is school transportation organized?

The limit of one child per seat must be respected, and every second seat must be empty. Children who reside at the same address may sit together on the same seat since they share the same home, so long as physical distance is maintained with other children.

111. What happens if there are too many students for one route?

The school boards have adjusted the routes. Parents who need transportation for their child must notify the school in advance.

112. It must be difficult for drivers behind a plexiglass barrier to manage rowdy students. If necessary, can the drivers move out from behind the barrier?

The drivers' role and responsibilities remain the same. Student safety is the priority. Details on this subject are provided in the [CNESST guide](#).

113. Who is providing the protection (plexiglass barrier) for drivers? The school board? The transportation company? Who is going to pay for it?

Details on this subject are provided in the [CNESST guide](#).

Any additional costs incurred as a direct result of these COVID-19 measures could be tallied by the school boards. For government accountability reports, it is important to identify all additional expenses that are directly associated with the COVID-19 measures and incurred on or after March 13, 2020, the date the government declared a public health emergency. In addition to the additional expenses incurred, the organizations must be able to indicate the revenues lost because of COVID-19, if applicable, and any cost savings resulting from the pandemic. Further information on the costs to be identified and the procedure for gathering information has been sent to the school boards.

114. How can the drivers ensure discipline while complying with physical distancing measures?

Parents are encouraged to make other arrangements for their children's transportation, unless it is absolutely impossible for them to do so. If children must use school transportation, parents must remind

them of the importance of avoiding contact with others. The drivers' role and responsibilities remain the same. Student safety is the priority. Details on this subject are provided in the [CNESST guide](#).

115. The school buses must be equipped to enable children to wash their hands as they board the bus. There will be costs associated with this new measure. Who will pay for them?

This is not a procedure required by the public health authorities.

116. How can the transportation agreements with private schools who are expecting services be honoured?

It is up to the organizations involved to come to an agreement on how to respect the measures issued by the public health authorities and any provisions in effect.

117. What will happen to the payment for the transportation provider if it cannot complete one or more of the routes due to a lack of personnel?

Based on the Deputy Minister's directive sent to school boards on May 3, 2020, a vehicle under contract required by a school board is honoured at 100%, as provided for in the contract of March 13, 2020, the date the health emergency was declared, regardless of the grade level of the students transported (elementary and/or secondary school). A contracted vehicle that is not required or not available is honoured at 50%, as provided for in the contract of March 13, 2020, the date the health emergency was declared, regardless of the grade level of the students transported (elementary and/or secondary school). As the gradual reopening may require a reorganization of routes, a vehicle's routes may no longer be the same as those originally planned. Certain adjustments could therefore be made, according to the terms and conditions set out in the initial contract and following an agreement between the school board and the transportation provider. This applies until the last day of the 2019-2020 school calendar.

118. Since there is no transportation service at lunchtime, what rate applies?

Under the Act to clarify the scope of the right to free education and to allow the regulation of certain financial contributions that may be required, no fee for services not rendered may be charged. Reimbursement of previously paid fees is therefore required.

119. Could two children from the same family be seated together on one seat in order to increase the number of students in one bus?

School transportation services are reduced to a minimum, and major restrictions have been implemented in order to comply with the recommendations issued by public health authorities. Children residing at the same address may sit together on the same seat because they are together at home anyways, provided that the rules for physical distancing from the other children are respected.

120. How often are vehicles (school buses and sedans) disinfected?

The driver's area (e.g. steering wheel, inside and outside door handles, inside mirrors, seatbelts, doors, seat) is cleaned and disinfected after every shift and every change of driver.

In addition, frequently touched surfaces inside the vehicles (e.g. seatbelts, straps, handrails, buzzers, doors, seats) are cleaned and disinfected daily.

You can also consult the *Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School Environment – COVID-19*.

121. How many students can be transported in a sedan? Who will buckle up the students (seatbelts or other forms of restraint)?

The rules for physical distancing between the children must be respected.

If there are no physical barriers and if the tasks absolutely require that the driver be within less than 2 metres of a student or students for more than 15 minutes, the driver must wear a procedure mask and eye protection at all times.

You can also consult the *Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School Environment – COVID-19*.

LABOUR RELATIONS

122. Will income replacement benefits continue to be paid?

According to the latest information, the CNESST recommends that income replacement benefits continue to be paid in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic until further notice.

For the time being, there is no need to terminate the contracts of the replacement personnel, because workers who are pregnant are currently on special leave and receiving income replacement benefits under the For a Safe Maternity Experience program.

Currently, the following general principle should be applied to all temporary employees: pay temporary employees based on their already scheduled hours (known and agreed upon schedule).

Please note that the situation must be reassessed if the payment of income replacement benefits for pregnant workers stops.

123. What about the calculation of experience?

Experience should be recognized based on the known and agreed upon schedule.

124. What about the calculation of seniority?

Seniority should be recognized based on the known and agreed upon schedule.

125. Will all staff be tested for COVID-19 before returning to work?

No, there are no guidelines from the public health authorities to that effect.

126. Will the employer assign secondary school teachers and specialists to other duties?

Ministerial Order 2020-008 of the Minister of Health and Social Services allows school boards to redeploy personnel to the location and at the time where needs justify doing so. In particular, it allows for secondary school teachers to be assigned to elementary schools.

- The Order requires that the unions and associations concerned be consulted before the application of this measure, unless the urgency of the situation does not permit doing so.

127. Are there any measures planned to expand the duties of elementary school teachers, such as lunchtime supervision or providing support to students who do not return to school?

Considering Ministerial Order 2020-008, the necessary adjustments are possible. The unions and associations concerned must be consulted.

128. What exemptions related to a return to work apply to staff?

It is not recommended that personnel with a health condition that makes them vulnerable (e.g. chronic disease, severe immunodeficiency, pregnancy) return to school. They could be assigned duties other than their usual responsibilities. For health and safety reasons, these staff members are encouraged to delay their return to school until September 2020.

The staff members targeted by this measure include:

- People with one or more of the following chronic conditions:
 - Chronic cardiac or pulmonary issues that are “uncontrolled” or “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
 - Diabetes that is “uncontrolled” or “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
 - Chronic liver problems (including cirrhosis) and chronic kidney diseases that are “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
 - Arterial hypertension that is “uncontrolled” or “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
- Significant obesity (for reference: BMI \geq 40)
- A medical condition that reduces the ability to evacuate respiratory secretions or that increases the risk of aspiration (e.g. cognitive impairment, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, neuromuscular disorder)

This list of conditions that increase the risk of complications from COVID-19 is taken from the interim recommendations published by the INSPQ. Please see the following links, available in French only:

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

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

With regard to the age-based criterion, the risk of complication significantly increases after age 70. All other cases with evidence of risks should be assessed case by case. The guidance from the public health authorities is:

- The risk of complications related to COVID-19 gradually increases with age and for certain medical conditions. Although the scientific knowledge is evolving rapidly, it is clear that the risk of complications is significantly higher after age 70. People in this age group must be informed of the risks.

However, considering that risk factors can vary and combine, each situation must be evaluated on an individual basis.

School boards are asked to show flexibility and to consider all the necessary accommodations for staff members who may be at increased risk. In some cases, this may mean that these staff members are provided with additional protective equipment or assigned to other tasks.

129. Can teachers and staff members who have concerns about family members with health conditions that make them vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 refuse to return to their place of work and insist on being allowed to work from home?

There are no exemption rules that apply with respect to the health of loved ones.

However, school boards are encouraged to take these requests into account when assigning duties, considering the fact that certain tasks require staff to be present in the classroom, while other tasks may very well be carried out remotely, such as supporting students who continue to learn from home. For the time that is not worked, employees must use the leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves). Sick days may not be used for this purpose and must be reserved for illness.

130. Are staff working from home required to wait until the teachers return to work, or must they return to the schools immediately? Will the start dates be the same for everyone?

- All elementary school staff can be called into their place of work as of May 4.
- All staff from secondary schools, adult education centres and vocational training centres can be called in to their place of work as of May 4.
- School administrators are responsible for making the decision and for calling in the staff they require.
- School administrators must also determine whether to allow staff to work from home and under what conditions.

We remind you that requiring staff members to gather in the workplace should be avoided: we ask that management hold telephone or video conference meetings instead whenever possible. If meetings must be held in person, staff members must keep a minimum distance of two metres from each other.

For staff in schools and centres located within the territory of the Montréal metropolitan community: The work is ideally often carried out from home. However, staff may be required to come into the workplace, depending on the needs determined by the school boards.

131. What measures are to be applied in the case of employees who cannot return to work for exceptional reasons that are beyond their control (e.g. employee with a child with special needs who cannot return to school)?

The school boards are responsible for assessing individual situations based on a specific set of circumstances, and are encouraged, where possible, to reassign staff to tasks that can be carried out from home. If the situation is beyond the employee's control and the impossibility of returning to school is justified, their salary is minimally maintained in accordance with the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract.

132. Are the Ministerial Orders still in effect?

Yes.

133. Will we be required to work in a different job category or for a different bargaining unit?

Ministerial Order 2020-008 of the Minister of Health and Social Services allows school boards to redeploy personnel to the location and at the time where needs justify doing so. Personnel may thus be assigned to duties of another position title, to another bargaining unit or to another employer.

134. How will educators be called in?

As employers, the school boards are responsible for managing human resources and applying the provisions relating to personnel management.

135. What solutions are planned concerning recess, lunchtime and specialist time so that weekly educational task hours are respected?

Ministerial Order 2020-008 of the Minister of Health and Social Services allows school boards to redeploy personnel to the location and at the time where needs justify doing so. In particular, it permits the reassignment of secondary school teachers to elementary schools.

The Order requires that the unions and associations concerned be consulted before the application of this measure, unless the urgency of the situation does not permit doing so. We are leaving it up to the school boards to consult the local unions in this regard.

136. How will in-class teaching and personalized follow-up tasks be distributed?

Teaching and personalized follow-up tasks should be distributed in collaboration with the school team. However, if a school is short of staff, the school board can call in other personnel to help as it has the latitude necessary to reassign personnel. It is recommended that the school boards consult the local unions on the reassignment process.

137. Can staff work in more than one school? Are they allowed to move between two schools?

Ministerial Order 2020-008 of the Minister of Health and Social Services allows school boards to redeploy personnel to the location and at the time where needs justify doing so.

According to the directives issued by the public health authorities, no guidelines prevent school staff from working in more than one location. However, it is recommended that travel between schools be reduced to a minimum.

138. Will teaching staff who do not live in the same region as their place of work be allowed to travel between regions?

For information on steps the Québec government has taken in relation to COVID-19, refer to its website: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/travelling-region-to-another-covid19/>

All Quebecers are being asked to avoid travelling from one region to another or from one city to another, except where necessary. Such travel should be confined to trips for medical reasons and work when teleworking is not possible.

139. How will staff who contract the coronavirus be paid?

The CNESST provides that a worker who becomes infected with COVID-19 during the course of their employment may be entitled to the usual benefits and services provided under the *Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases* (AIAOD). For more information, visit <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Pages/covid-19.aspx>

If an employee contracts COVID-19 outside of work and is unable to work (cannot work remotely), regular wage loss insurance applies. Up to the end of the waiting period, the employee's bank of sick days is debited.

If an employee contracts COVID-19 outside of work, but is able to work remotely, they continue to receive their salary and their bank of sick days is not debited.

140. How should teachers be compensated if they must do more than their usual tasks?

Teachers will be paid the salary to which they are entitled within the school board as per the provisions of the collective agreement and the work carried out. This includes the 1/1000 when assigned a workload greater than that provided for in the agreement.

Therefore, an elementary school teacher who works more than their usual workload of 23 hours a week and a secondary school teacher who works more than their usual workload of 20 hours a week will be paid the 1/1000 of their salary in compliance with the applicable provisions. A secondary school teacher who is reassigned to an elementary school and who works more than their usual workload of 20 hours a week will be paid the 1/1000 of their salary.

With regard to vocational training and adult education, the time paid based on the planned and agreed upon schedule for the period during which the schools were closed is considered time actually worked. As such, the 1/1000 for exceeding 720 or 800 hours, whichever is applicable, is paid with the last salary payment of the school year in accordance with the principle of annualization in the collective agreement and is based on the time actually worked in their usual tasks or on courses and lessons, and on the pedagogical follow-up linked to the specialty.

141. Which individual or organization should be contacted if an employee refuses to follow the workplace health and safety guidelines and protocols, and the directives issued by the public health authorities?

For more information, visit <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19-info-en/Pages/covid-19.aspx>.

142. What is the process for assigning workloads in order to fill staffing needs?

As employers, the school boards are responsible for managing human resources in accordance with legislation and the collective agreements. It is therefore their duty to develop a reassignment process. It is recommended that they consult the local unions regarding reassignment procedures.

If there is a need for elementary school teachers, the school boards can call on secondary school teachers, the lists of supply teachers, and students and graduating students in education.

Ministerial Order 2020-008 of the Minister of Health and Social Services allows school boards to redeploy personnel to the location and at the time where needs justify doing so. In particular, it permits the reassignment of secondary school teachers to elementary schools. The Order requires that the unions and associations concerned be consulted before the application of this measure, unless the urgency of the situation does not permit doing so.

143. What can schools do to ensure the health and safety of their staff?

Schools must implement the health and safety measures recommended in the *Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the School Environment – COVID-19* produced by the CNEEST.

144. What will happen with teachers who have already completed their work year (vocational training teachers)?

The work year comprises 200 days, distributed over the calendar year. Teachers can be assigned work during these 200 days. Except as provided in the Ministerial Orders, the relevant provisions of the collective agreement apply.

145. Are personnel living in the United States permitted to cross the border to come to work?

Employees in the school network may cross the border to work if they have no COVID-19 symptoms.

When these employees cross the border, they will have to answer health questions about COVID-19 symptoms. If they have no symptoms, they may come into Canada to work. They will not be asked to self-isolate when they return home. Border services will give them certain information, such as how to watch for the appearance of symptoms.

146. Will the Ministère implement measures to help people experiencing severe stress over returning to work in the schools?

As employers, school boards are responsible for managing human resources, including implementation of an employee assistance program to support staff members who experience difficult situations.

In addition, the CNESST has prepared a checklist on work-related psychosocial risks to help employers in all sectors ensure that mental health issues are taken into consideration in the current context: <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/covid-19/Documents/DC100-2146G-Fiche-SantePsy-Covid19.pdf> (in French only).

Finally, on May 6, the government announced the implementation of an action plan on mental health that will, among other things, make it possible to mobilize more resources to improve psychosocial and mental health services.

147. What is the risk of contamination for a member of the school staff who cannot respect social distancing rules while working with a child who falls down or gets hurt, for example?

Please refer to the INSPQ sheet at <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/recommandations-interimaires-suivi-dans-la-communaute-covid19-2020-03-24.pdf> (in French only). According to the INSPQ, in order to facilitate risk assessment and management of individuals who have been exposed to a COVID-19 case, exposure can be categorized according to four levels of risk: high, medium, low and insignificant.

Risk is considered low if the person is in contact for a short time (less than 10-15 minutes) and is less than 2 metres away, and the case is probable or confirmed. It is important to note that unless there is an outbreak in the school, the likelihood that a child has a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 is insignificant.

If the employee is unable to follow the physical distancing rule when a child falls down or gets hurt, the risk of contamination is very low. The staff member must respect the hygiene measures (e.g. handwashing, not touching their face).

148. What should be done for employees who have trouble finding a place in daycare?

The Ministère de la Famille is responsible for managing educational daycare services. Please see the following link: <https://www.quebec.ca/famille-et-soutien-auxpersonnes/servicesgardeeducatifsenfance-covid19/31>.

The school boards are encouraged to consider the possibility of offering teleworking to employees who cannot return to school for that reason. The school board must also ask the employee to provide a supporting document to that effect (e.g. a letter from the daycare informing the parent that their child cannot be accommodated). If the employee cannot work from home, their salary will be paid based on the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract.

149. Will professional staff members see their tasks modified? If so, can they be assigned a teaching task?

In the current context, professionals must, if possible, work at their primary task, which is to support the most vulnerable students. If no other alternative is available (substitute teachers, teaching specialists, secondary school teachers, education graduates), a professional could be assigned a teaching task.

150. When do vocational training and adult general education teachers have to return to work in their training centres?

For teachers in centres located outside the territory of the Montréal metropolitan community:

- Personnel throughout Québec were expected to assume their full workload as of May 4. Local measures must ensure that health risks are reduced to a minimum. Where it is deemed possible for personnel to continue providing distance education and to perform some or all of their tasks from home, they may do so. Nevertheless, the school board must ensure that the hours of work performed through teleworking and in person correspond to the hours set down in the work contract.

For teachers in centres located within the territory of the Montréal metropolitan community:

- The work is ideally often carried out from home. However, staff may be required to come into the workplace, depending on the needs determined by the school boards.

151. As of May 4, should employees be paid based on the needs determined by the school board or based on the schedule that had been planned and agreed upon before the closure? For staff who are employed on a cyclical basis (staff who are laid off during the summer), can we lay them off earlier if they are no longer required?

Last March, at the start of the closure and when there was uncertainty about how work would be organized until the end of the school year, guidelines were provided for payment of salaried employees based on the hours in the known and agreed-upon schedule.

Given that there are no more uncertainties with regard to school organization from now until the end of the school year, the needs in terms of human resources must now be assessed in accordance with the services to be maintained, while respecting the collective agreements. Therefore, school boards must manage their work contracts in accordance with their assessed needs. This means that, if the collective agreements allow it, the hours of work and remuneration can be reduced, and the layoffs can start earlier.

152. What do we do if employees aged 70 or over want to work despite the exemption criteria issued by the public health authorities?

According to the guidelines issued by the public health authorities, the risk of complications related to COVID-19 gradually increases with age and for certain medical conditions. Although the scientific knowledge is evolving rapidly, it is clear that the risk of complications is significantly higher after age 70. People in this age group must be informed of the risks.

However, considering that risk factors can vary and combine, each situation must be evaluated on an individual basis. Therefore, the school board must assess the risk to the worker, the impact on essential services for the public and the possibility of ensuring that the worker is protected.

153. What guidelines are to be followed for staff who are unable to return to the school or who refuse to do so? What remuneration is to be paid?

The following chart presents the various possible situations, the guideline to be followed and, if applicable, the remuneration that applies.

Justified situations beyond the employee's control	
Reason	Guidelines and remuneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One or more health conditions that make the employee vulnerable - Aged 70 or over - Other exceptional reasons (e.g. must care for their child who has a handicap and attends secondary school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the possibility of the employee working from home. - The salary is minimally maintained based on the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impossibility of obtaining a place in a daycare because of the reduced daycare capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the possibility of the employee working from home. - Ask the employee to provide a supporting document (e.g. a letter from a CPE informing the parent that their child cannot be accommodated). - The salary is minimally maintained based on the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract.
Other situations	
Reason	Guidelines and remuneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision not to send their child to school or daycare despite the fact that it is possible to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the possibility of the employee working from home. - Their salary is maintained for the time worked. - For the time not worked, the employee must first use their leaves for parental and family responsibilities and then the other leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves). Sick days may not be used for this purpose and must be reserved for illness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear for the health of loved ones who have health conditions that make them vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the possibility of the employee working from home. - For the time not worked, the employee must use the leaves permitted under their work conditions (e.g. vacations, unpaid leaves). Sick days may not be used for this purpose and must be reserved for illness. - Their salary is maintained for the time worked.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercising of the right of refusal under the <i>Act respecting occupational health and safety</i> - (has reasonable grounds for believing that carrying out this work poses a danger to their health, safety and physical well-being) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steps are to be taken with the CNESST. - Their salary is maintained in accordance with the known and agreed-upon schedule in the work contract.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refusal without any valid reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative or disciplinary measures may apply.

154. What is the protocol for staff who return from vacation abroad and are obliged to voluntarily self-isolate for 14 days?

If an employee is unable to work from home while self-isolating, they must use the leave provided for under their working conditions (e.g. vacation days, unpaid leave) to cover this period. Prior authorization from the school board is required for these requests for leave. Sick days may not be used if the employee is not sick and must be reserved for illness.

It is important to remember that employees will not continue to be paid if they are unable to work from home while self-isolating after returning from a trip, unless they requested and obtained leave in accordance with their working conditions.

Public health guidelines may change. Employees are responsible for verifying whether or not new guidelines were issued before leaving on their trip. It is up to them to comply with these guidelines and to inform their employer of such, where necessary.

If an employee contracts COVID-19 and cannot work remotely, regular wage loss insurance applies. Up to the end of the waiting period, the employee's bank of sick days is debited.

155. Will the school boards cover the travel expenses for staff who are reassigned to a different school than the one they usually work at?

As employers, the school boards are responsible for managing human resources and applying the provisions relating to travel expenses.

It is therefore the responsibility of the local parties to make decisions regarding a subject that results from negotiated and agreed upon stipulations on a local or regional scale or local arrangements.

156. Will teachers receive compensation if their classes exceed the maximum number of students per group in elementary school?

The provisions of the collective agreement apply. In order to be entitled to compensation for exceeding the maximum number of students in each group, the following condition must be met: have more than the maximum number of students registered for at least half of the days of class in a given month.

Given that schools must follow public health guidelines (maximum of 15 students per group and 2 metres physical distance), class organization had to be reviewed and, in most cases, classes were divided. Furthermore, depending on the chosen school organization model, follow-up with students who are distance learning can be consolidated and assigned to a different teacher than the homeroom teacher. In any chosen school organization model, a teacher who is no longer teaching their entire original group of students (the maximum number of which is provided for in the collective agreements) should not receive oversized class compensation.

However, in some cases where a teacher is considered to be teaching all of their students (original oversized class) at the same time (in class and at a distance), oversized class compensation can be paid out for the number of teaching hours worked with that class.

157. Will teachers receive compensation if their classes exceed the maximum number of students per group in secondary school?

The provisions of the collective agreement apply. In order to be entitled to compensation for exceeding the maximum number of students in each group, the following condition must be met: have more than the maximum number of students registered for at least half of the days of class in a given month. If the

secondary school teacher is considered to have taught (carried out the majority of their characteristic responsibilities as defined in the collective agreements and the school board certifies that the number of students enrolled for at least half of the class days in a given month exceeds the maximum provided for in the collective agreement), the compensation can be paid.

158. Some daycare educators' first aid certificates are due to expire. Under the current COVID-19 circumstances, they are unable to renew their certification. Can the school boards assign work to educators who no longer meet this requirement?

The *Regulation respecting childcare services provided at school* requires that childcare staff hold an up-to-date general first aid certificate. However, in this exceptional situation, school boards are asked to show some flexibility toward employees whose certificates will soon expire and to ensure that it is renewed as soon as possible. Nevertheless, it is not permitted to hire staff who have never met this employment requirement.

EMPLOYEES IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

159. Are employees who were redeployed to the health and social services system obliged to isolate themselves for 14 days prior to returning to the school system? If so, what will they be paid and who will be responsible for paying it?

People who have been working in the CHSLDs are not obliged to isolate themselves for 14 days unless they had medium-to-high risk contact with someone with COVID-19. Therefore, any contact that a worker had with someone with COVID-19 in the 48 hours prior to the appearance of symptoms up until the time that person was moved out of isolation needs to be evaluated.

The following medium-to-high risk contacts require an isolation period of 14 days:

- providing physical care to a confirmed case without using a mask or any other form of protection
- being in direct contact with infectious bodily fluids (being sprayed in the face by droplets when the patient coughed or sneezed, having touched their face after having touched a tissue full of secretions with bare hands without having washed their hands afterward, etc.)
- having had prolonged contact with a case, for at least 15 minutes and within less than 2 metres, when not wearing protective equipment (procedural mask, gown, gloves, visor)

For more information on contacts and isolation, please read the following datasheet: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/2902-gestion-cas-contacts-communaute-covid19.pdf>

Ultimately, it is crucial that there be strict application of a policy regarding the obligatory absence from the workplace for employees who present symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, cough, breathing difficulties, sudden loss of sense of smell or taste, or other symptoms listed on the following site: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/general-information-about-coronavirus/#c46469>).

If an employee starts to exhibit symptoms while in the workplace, there needs to be a procedure for isolating them in a room and bringing them a procedural mask (or surgical mask), if available. Calling 1-877-644-4545 is also essential.

If employees must isolate themselves, they will be paid in accordance with their known and agreed-upon schedule in the education system. The school board is responsible for paying this salary.

160. Should staff working in the health and social services network return to the education network if the school board needs them for the reopening of schools?

Education personnel will remain assigned to the health network so long as they are needed in the fight against COVID-19. Training centres must make the necessary provisions to quickly resume the training of students who are currently unable to continue their studies once their teacher is released from the health network.

TÉLUQ TRAINING

161. Can the training on distance education be offered to technical support employees who are working in direct student services and who are already following up with students?

Although this training is mainly for teachers at the elementary, secondary, college and university levels, it can also be taken by other staff members in the education system (non-teaching professionals, support staff, administrators, adult general education staff or vocational training staff) who want to learn about distance education. All staff members can also visit the new “Teachers” section available since April 27 on the [Open School](#) website. It contains many resources for starting distance learning as well as course modules offered by the Commission scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin.

162. Will the TÉLUQ training be recognized as part of the Bachelor’s of Education in Vocational Training?

Programs of study that lead to a teaching licence are recognized first by the Comité d'agrément des programmes de formation à l'enseignement (CAPFE) that accredited the program, and then by the Minister. A student must submit a request to the Ministère if they wish to benefit from the recognition of prior learning. The Ministère will then direct the students to the Université de Montréal, as needed. The universities also recognize prior learning to credit some program courses.

163. Is the TÉLUQ training mandatory for all teachers?

The school boards are responsible for managing personnel. À cet effet, le Ministère laisse le soin aux commissions scolaires de déterminer les obligations quant à la formation à distance offerte par la TELUQ.

CERTIFICATION OF STUDIES

164. Can MEES grant diplomas to an entire cohort of students who have not written their final exams, including ministerial examinations?

The Minister can, if the circumstances warrant it, cancel an examination and retain the marks obtained by the school as a final grade. Due to the current exceptional circumstances, ministerial examinations will not be administered, and school results will be taken into account in the awarding of diplomas. Students will move up to the next grade level based on the teachers’ professional judgment and the students’ previous results.

165. [MODIFIED] Will parents be involved in the process of deciding whether students repeat their school year or move up to the next one?

As provided for in the legal frameworks, parents are stakeholders in the process of deciding whether their child repeats the school year or moves up to the next one, with the exception of Secondary Cycle Two, where the decision is made by subject.

The legal frameworks state:

With regard to repeating a school year (*Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*, s. 13.1), for elementary education and at the end of the first year of secondary school, the school principal may, exceptionally, in a student's interest and to facilitate the student's academic progress, allow the student to remain for a second year in the same class. This decision is made by the school team with parental participation within the framework of the student's individualized education plan. This measure may be used only once during elementary education and once during secondary education. The process is the same at the end of preschool education, following a request, with reasons, by the child's parents (*Education Act*, s. 96.17).

166. What will happen to secondary students who received a conditional acceptance to CÉGEP?

Students with an SSD will be admitted to CÉGEP next fall. If the program to which the student wishes to be admitted has special conditions for admission that they do not have, the student must be admitted to the *Springboard to a DCS* pathway and complete the prerequisite either at the college level or through adult education. If they need only 6 credits or fewer to obtain an SSD, their admittance status will be "conditional," and they can complete the 6 remaining secondary school credits during the fall term. According to the Minister's guidelines, students who are on their way to successfully completing the programs of study in General Education in the Youth Sector will receive the credits needed to obtain an SSD. In this way, if students meet the conditions for the awarding of an SSD as stipulated in the *Basic school regulation*, they will obtain their SSD in June 2020.

FUNDING

167. What allocations will be provided to cover all the additional costs?

Details will be forthcoming regarding the reimbursement of any additional expenses.

In the meantime, the school boards are encouraged to record any additional costs that are incurred as a direct result of the COVID-19 measures.

168. Will any financial assistance be available if staff must be hired to comply with the ratios?

Ministerial Order 2020-008 of the Minister of Health and Social Services allows school boards to redeploy personnel to the location and at the time where needs justify doing so. Personnel may thus be assigned to duties of another position title, to another bargaining unit or to another employer. In particular, it permits the reassignment of secondary school teachers (and other professionals) to elementary schools.

The Order requires that the unions and associations concerned be consulted before the application of this measure, unless the urgency of the situation does not permit doing so. – This Order was renewed by Ministerial Order 2020-022 on April 29, 2020.

Any additional costs incurred as a direct result of these COVID-19 measures could be tallied by the school boards. For government accountability reports, it is important to identify all additional expenses that are directly associated with the COVID-19 measures and incurred on or after March 13, 2020, the date the government declared a public health emergency. In addition to the additional expenses incurred, the organizations must be able to indicate the revenues lost because of COVID-19, if applicable, and any cost savings resulting from the pandemic. Further information on the costs to be identified and the procedure for gathering information has been sent to the school boards.

169. Can we carry forward unspent funds, including measures covered by agreements, without penalty?

According to the law, operating credits cannot be carried over. These credits are allocated annually and, when the year is over, what remains unspent is no longer available. Under the budget rules for school boards, operating grants are allocated for one school year and cannot be carried forward to a future school year.

With a few exceptions, the operating budget rules contain recurring measures. These same measures will be included in the school board operating budget rules for subsequent years.

There are a few exceptions because some allocations were awarded at the end of a given school year. Carrying over revenue from one school year to another is only possible in compliance with the requirements stated in the accounting standards for the public sector. Every year, the school boards receive a letter specifying the measures where funds could be carried over to the next school year for the authorized projects. With regard to measures covered by agreements, the terms and conditions stated in the collective agreements prevail.

170. Will the specialist time voted on in the school budgets remain available if it is not used?

Should the school have sums remaining in its budget, it is to refer to the school board for guidelines on how they can be used. The school boards may continue their expenditures in compliance with the various applicable frameworks, particularly the provisions set out in the budget rules, the *Act respecting contracting by public bodies*, Direction de la santé publique guidelines (regarding the access to buildings), etc.

Refer to the answers in the Labour Relations section for information on the payment of specialist personnel.

AIDE FINANCIÈRE AUX ÉTUDES (STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)

171. Should I keep paying back my student loan?

Non. No, the government has announced that it will be postponing repayment of any loans incurred under the Loans and Bursaries Program and the Loans Program for Part-Time Studies for a period of six months. The interest will be paid by the government. No payments are expected during this period. You do not have to take any steps or provide any proof to benefit from this exceptional measure, since it applies automatically to anyone who has incurred a debt with Aide financière aux études.

172. Does the postponement measure cover income tax refunds?

Yes. Fiscal compensation is included in the postponement measure.

173. If I discontinue a course because of the current crisis and lose my full-time status as a result, will I still receive my payments?

Aide financière aux études will not process any change in beneficiaries' full-time status for the Winter 2020 term, meaning that students who discontinue certain courses will continue to be deemed full-time.

- 174. I am currently in my last period of eligibility for the government's student financial assistance program. If I have to discontinue a course due to not being able to complete it because of the current circumstances, will I be eligible for the program next year?**

No. Students in this situation will be enrolled part-time only and will thus not be eligible for the Loans and Bursaries Program. However, full-time students who have exceeded the program's limit as a result of the current situation, although it is unlikely, can submit an exceptional case application.

- 175. Can the debt ceilings and eligibility time frames for Aide financière aux études programs be adapted in accordance with the length of the crisis?**

Even though this should affect very few students, Aide financière aux études may take the impact of the crisis into account administratively. The limits and deadlines in the regulation do not need to be modified because Aide financière aux études has some latitude in applying the regulation, thanks to the exceptional case process.

- 176. What adjustments will be made to the financial assistance program in response to the crisis?**

For the moment, the financial assistance program has not been modified. Payments will continue to be issued. In the event that the term is extended, assistance will also be extended.

- 177. Will MEES create a last-resort fund for students who are affected by the health crisis but do not have access to employment insurance or other assistance programs provided by the governments of Québec and Canada?**

For now, AFE is not planning for any specific allocations. However, there are some alternatives, including the possibility of being deemed as registered between two periods of study for students in serious and exceptional financial distress. In addition, students who are in a precarious financial situation that could prevent them from continuing their studies and who do not have access to the announced government programs related to the COVID-19 situation can make an exceptional case application.

- 178. I will receive my last loans and bursaries payment in April. What should I do after that?**

There are certain possibilities available to students, including that of being deemed enrolled between two study periods, which is an option available to students who are experiencing a serious and exceptional financial situation. In addition, students who are in a precarious financial situation that could endanger their studies and who do not have access to the governmental programs announced in response to COVID-19 pandemic can submit an exceptional case application.

- 179. Do you know what impact the COVID-19 Canada Emergency Response Benefit will have on the calculation of loans and bursaries?**

The Emergency Response Benefit is taxable income and will be taken into account for the 2020-2021 Loans and Bursaries Program. It will have no impact on the current year (2019-2020), because the income that is taken into account is that earned between January 1 and December 31, 2019.

- 180. Will payments under the Loans and Bursaries Program continue for students in adult general education and vocational training? Should educational institutions enter information in the system for that purpose?**

Students enrolled in adult general education are not eligible for the Loans and Bursaries Program. In the case of students enrolled in vocational training, Aide financière aux études is working with the educational

institutions to update the school calendar and student status. If the term is extended, Aide financière aux études will extend the financial assistance in accordance with the new calendar.

181. Will financial assistance be adapted in order to support students whose financial situation has changed (e.g. responsibility for a dependent child or loss of employment)?

The Loans and Bursaries Program already takes into account the financial needs of students who are responsible for a dependent child. Students who have lost their job as a result of the current crisis are encouraged to apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

182. If a student is forced to withdraw from all of their courses (e.g. to care for their children or due to illness) but wishes to continue their studies during the fall term, can it be confirmed that the financial assistance they receive for the Winter 2020 term will not be reduced?

Yes, financial assistance payments for the Winter 2020 term will not be modified.

183. If a student is deemed enrolled for the summer term, will these months count toward the period of eligibility and the cumulative debt?

No, these months will not be taken into account for the period of eligibility. Moreover, the assistance will be provided as a bursary only.

184. I benefit from the student financial assistance program, but my income has dropped drastically because I have lost my job. The financial assistance payment will not be enough for me to make it through the next month. Can I adjust my income in order to receive a larger payment over the coming months?

The income taken into account to calculate the 2019-2020 student financial assistance program is the income generated between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2019. It is therefore not possible to adjust the income downward. For that reason, any fluctuations in the students' income in 2020 are not considered for 2019-2020. In some cases, they may, however, affect the calculations for 2020-2021. The government has announced various programs for people who have lost their job as a result of the current situation. However, students who are in a precarious financial situation that could endanger their studies and who do not have access to the governmental programs announced in response to COVID-19 pandemic can submit an exceptional case application.

185. Will the winter instalment under the Allowance for Special Needs Program be paid?

Under the Allowance for Special Needs Program, reimbursement for specialized services or adapted private transport will be allowed until May 1, 2020. As a result, the calculation of allowances for special needs will be adjusted and the amounts granted will be based on this new end date.

After May 1, 2020, the program will only cover payment for the hours worked and the private transportation for round trips actually taken between the student's residence and the educational institution. The total amount paid may not exceed the amount indicated in the needs assessment carried out by the educational institution for the period of study underway. The calculation of allowances for special needs will be adjusted based on the recommendation and supporting documents received. Any amount overpaid for this period must be reimbursed to the Ministère. The periods in which there was no instruction being given cannot be covered. However, given the current situation, the period in which students participated in distance learning will be covered by the program.

186. What impacts will the adjustments made to Winter 2020 internships have on the scholarships paid out under the Intern Perseverance and Success Scholarship for Various Programs in Education, Health and Social Services?

In the interest of fairness for all students, Aide financière aux études (AFE) has implemented the following measures:

- If the final internship was cut short

For an internship that began prior to March 16, 2020, AFE will rely on the institution's confirmation as to whether or not the internship was successful in determining whether to issue the second instalment of the scholarship. If the educational institution deems the internship Incomplete/Unsuccessful, the second instalment will not be issued. If a student resumes their internship, they will receive the second instalment once the internship has been successfully completed.

- If the final internship was cancelled and replaced by an integrated study project

For an internship that began on March 16, 2020, or later and that was replaced with an integrated study project, students in the following programs remain eligible for the scholarship:

- DVS in Health, Assistance and Nursing (05325 and 05825)
- DCS in Nursing (180.A0 and 180.B0)
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing

For any other programs, the educational institutions must inform AFE by email at AFE-Partenaires@education.gouv.qc.ca to allow the students' eligibility for the scholarship programs to be assessed.

- If the final internship was postponed

There is no change in the award criteria.

- If the final internship was carried out by working in the health network

Following the Ministerial Order issued on April 15, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 crisis in residential and long-term care centres (CHSLD):

- students in this situation are not eligible for the scholarship program, since they receive a salary as part of their internship
- students whose application had already been accepted remain eligible for the scholarship program, even though they receive a salary as part of their internship

Lastly, in order to be eligible for the scholarship program, it is essential that the internship be carried out in Québec in a public, subsidized private or community organization, barring special circumstances.

PRIVATE EDUCATION

187. Is protective and disinfecting equipment (gloves, masks, visors, plexiglass, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer, etc.) available to private schools?

The Ministère has implemented procedures to facilitate the acquisition of essential materials and equipment by educational institutions in both the public and private sectors in order to ensure that they

are able to meet the minimum requirements. Nevertheless, the schools will still be responsible, as always, for obtaining materials and equipment based on their needs and those of their clientele.

188. Can academic and practical competencies be evaluated by private vocational training centres using distance learning for local and ministerial examinations?

It is possible for private vocational training centres to evaluate learning using local examinations from a distance, if they show that they are able to supervise the exams properly. However, the administering of some local examinations has been permitted at the centres starting May 11 in all regions with the exception of the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette, where this activity resumed on May 25. All ministerial examinations, however, must be administered at the training centre, while respecting physical distancing rules.

189. Are private vocational training centres authorized to provide distance education to new cohorts without requesting modification of their current permit?

Private vocational training centres may provide distance education, without requesting modification of their current permit, for cohorts already enrolled as well as for new cohorts until secondary schools in their region reopen. However, ministerial examinations must be administered at the educational institution, while respecting physical distancing rules.

190. Should private schools, accredited and non-accredited, honour school transportation contracts for the period of March 30 to May 1, 2020, for all types of daily transportation (bus, minibus and sedan)?

For the period after March 27, accredited private schools that receive allocations for the organization of school transportation were asked to set aside these ministerial subsidies for contracts to enable school transportation businesses to maintain their activities and be ready to quickly resume services on the day that schools reopen. Moreover, as the Ministère is not involved in contracts between the schools and their suppliers, it is the schools' responsibility to come to an agreement with their partners on the applicable terms and conditions.

191. Will the teachers and non-teaching professionals at private schools have access to the free training on distance education offered by TÉLUQ?

Although this training is mainly for teachers at the elementary, secondary, college and university levels, it can also be taken by other staff members in the education system (non-teaching professionals, support staff, administrators, adult general education staff or vocational training staff) who want to learn about distance education. All staff members can also visit the new "Teachers" section available since April 27 on the [Open School](#) website. It contains many resources for starting distance learning as well as course modules offered by the Commission scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin. The private network can also access this training.

192. What responsibilities do private schools have if a contract is terminated as a result of the current crisis (e.g. Charlemagne system, proof from the parents that the child is enrolled in another school)?

In such cases, private schools are asked to apply the provisions of the *Act respecting private education* to ensure that all children comply with compulsory school attendance once services resume.

193. What fees can private schools charge parents in the current situation?

The Ministère is not involved in the contracts established between private schools and parents whose children are enrolled at these schools, and cannot intervene. It is up to each private school to establish the terms and conditions that meet the current exceptional circumstances.

194. Does the Ministère plan to use security insurance to compensate parents who paid for private school services but did not receive them as a result of COVID-19?

The aim of the security is to ensure the performance of the private school's obligations under sections 66 to 76 of the *Act respecting private education* (obligations concerning educational service contracts); it is therefore used when a private school ceases to operate permanently. In this specific case, security is held for a period of 12 months or until it is demonstrated that all amounts to students or clients have been reimbursed.

195. Should inter school/board agreements be maintained?

Inter school/board agreements remain in place, and any related payments must be made by the school boards, since they receive allocations from the Ministère. The private school remains responsible for the student for whom the agreement was made and must maintain contact with the student and their parents while the schools are closed.

196. Will private schools be subject to the same rules regarding the reopening of schools? Will these rules apply to students and staff in both elementary and secondary schools? Will private schools have to recall all staff who were laid off?

Yes, the same rules apply to the private network. Private schools are their personnel's employers and must therefore make this decision themselves, in accordance with the local or collective agreements. However, they must ensure to have all the staff required in order to comply with the established guidelines for reopening the schools and providing students with the necessary services, whether in class or at a distance.

197. Will administrators of private schools be obliged to pay staff members who have been advised not to return to the workplace (e.g. chronic disease, severe immunodeficiency, pregnancy)?

It is not recommended that personnel with a health condition that makes them vulnerable (e.g. chronic disease, severe immunodeficiency, pregnancy) return to school. Private schools are their personnel's employers and must therefore make this decision themselves, in accordance with the local or collective agreements. For health and safety reasons, these staff members are encouraged to delay their return to school until September 2020.

The staff members targeted by this measure include:

- People with one or more of the following chronic conditions:
 - Chronic cardiac or pulmonary issues that are “uncontrolled” or “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
 - Diabetes that is “uncontrolled” or “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
 - Chronic liver problems (including cirrhosis) and chronic kidney diseases that are “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care

- Arterial hypertension that is “uncontrolled” or “complicated” and therefore sufficiently serious as to require regular medical follow-up or hospital care
- Significant obesity (for reference: BMI \geq 40)
- A medical condition that reduces the ability to evacuate respiratory secretions or that increases the risk of aspiration (e.g. cognitive impairment, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, neuromuscular disorder)

This list of conditions that increase the risk of complications from COVID-19 is taken from the interim recommendations published by the INSPQ. Please see the following links, available in French only:

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

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

With regard to the age-based criterion, the risk of complication significantly increases after age 70. All other cases with evidence of risks should be assessed case by case.

The risk of complications related to COVID-19 gradually increases with age and for certain medical conditions. Although the scientific knowledge is evolving rapidly, it is clear that the risk of complications is significantly higher after age 70. People in this age group must be informed of the risks.

However, considering that risk factors can vary and combine, each situation must be evaluated on an individual basis. All employers are asked to show flexibility and to consider all the necessary accommodations for staff members who may be at increased risk. In some cases, this may mean that these staff members are provided with additional protective equipment or assigned to other tasks.

198. **Can a private school withhold a student’s report card or diploma if the parents have yet to fully pay the tuition fees?**

The school cannot withhold a student’s results simply because payment did not occur. This obligation stems from the *Act respecting private education* and the *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*, not the educational services contract.

LEARNING CAMPS, SUMMER CLASSES AND GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

199. **[NEW] Why are learning camps being implemented?**

To the extent that human and material resources permit, these learning camps could be open to vulnerable students who would not otherwise have had the opportunity to return to school this year, and specifically to:

- elementary school students in schools located in the Montréal metropolitan community, the regional county municipality of Joliette and Ville de L’Épiphanie.
- secondary school students throughout the Québec school system

Please note that the authorization obtained from the Direction générale de la santé publique will be in effect as of June 8, 2020. You can therefore set up learning camps as of that date, if you are able to do so and deem it necessary based on the needs expressed in your community.

Students will attend these learning camps on a voluntary basis and by invitation only. Unlike the summer classes, no formal evaluation of learning will be conducted in learning camps.

Groups formed by June 30, 2020, must consist of a maximum of 10 students. The school service centres will identify the services they wish to provide.

It is important to note that, while the organization of these learning camps provides you with an additional tool to support vulnerable students, it is not mandatory that they be implemented. Learning camps are not to replace the excellent local initiatives already being carried out in many schools.

200. **[NEW] Why not hold summer classes? What is the difference between summer classes and learning camps?**

Summer classes are for Secondary IV and V students who have failed a course. They provide them with an opportunity to obtain the credits required for the certification of studies or a prerequisite to rectify their situation and continue their studies. In summer classes students receive instructional services and are formally evaluated on what they have learned. Summer classes are not intended for students in other levels of education or for whom the certification of studies is not at issue. The objective of the educational support services offered during “learning camps” is to prepare students for the transition to the next level, and no formal evaluation of learning will take place.

201. **[NEW] How many students are expected to attend learning camps?**

This measure permits the implementation of adapted services for students with special needs and for whom additional support would be appropriate. Students who could benefit from these services will be selected by institutions, taking into account their knowledge of their students’ needs. Students’ participation is voluntary. For this reason, it is not possible to estimate the number of students who will take advantage of these services.

202. **[NEW] Why are summer classes only offered to Secondary IV and V students?**

The summer classes are only offered to Secondary IV and V students to allow them to complete their certification of studies and to obtain the prerequisites required to rectify their situation and continue their studies.

203. **[NEW] Can in-person classes take place for Secondary IV mathematics students who are required to complete prerequisites to be admitted to Secondary V mathematics?**

First, a distinction must be made between the “bridge” and the “transition” between options. The bridge between options allows Secondary IV students who successfully completed the CST Option to complete the requirements needed to enrol in one of the higher-level Secondary V options. These students do not have to attend summer class, and may be admitted to the Secondary V option if the school implements the necessary support measures. However, under the supervision of their Secondary V teacher, these students must also be willing to devote all the time they need to deepen their existing knowledge or become familiar with new mathematical concepts and processes.

The transition between options is intended for Secondary IV students who failed one of the higher-level mathematics options (TS or SN) and who want to change to the CST Option (lower level) in order to obtain the necessary credits. These students may, once educational services resume, attend summer class and for this summer only write a locally prepared examination to obtain the four mathematics credits required to obtain an SSD, provided the 2-metre physical distancing rule issued by the health authorities is respected.

204. [NEW] Is it possible to organize activities in school for Secondary V students who are graduating?

Graduation activities may be organized in all regions of Québec, including the Montréal metropolitan community and the regional county municipality of Joliette. Students may go to school one last time to say goodbye to their teachers and to each other, to participate in the traditional signing of yearbooks and to take memorable photos. These activities must respect physical distancing rules.

A schedule must be established with regard to saying goodbye to teachers and the signing of yearbooks, if applicable. The number of individuals present in rooms at the same time must be limited as much as possible, while strictly respecting the following health measures:

- Yearbooks must already be placed on tables in the gym.
- Each student must use a personal pen.
- Gloves must be worn.
- Face coverings must be worn.

OTHER

205. Will cancelled cultural activities be reimbursed?

Cancelled activities will be reimbursed automatically. For postponed activities, parents can make a request for reimbursement if the new date for the activity does not suit them.

206. Can further information be provided concerning the request regarding the filling-out of the attendance register related to the accountability report – employment retention?

We can confirm that identifying the cost of personnel who were unable to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic is not required. The Société GRICS attendance register must not be used for this purpose.

The government reporting entities, including the school boards, should record the additional costs incurred as a direct result of these COVID-19 measures. As part of this documentation process, the school board may have to submit corroborating evidence in support of its statement of overtime worked and declared by staff assigned to manage COVID-19. The attendance register may be used to support the declaration of overtime related to the management of COVID-19. Other tools may also be used for this purpose, for example, a pay stub detailing the paid overtime.

207. How should we refund sums raised through fundraising campaigns?

The Minister of Education and Higher Education is not responsible for guidelines governing this sort of decision. However, it seems appropriate to come to a solution with the parents and students concerned.

208. Are any measures planned to meet the nutritional needs that some children may have?

Yes. MEES recently announced the implementation of a universal food assistance program in conjunction with other ministries and organizations, including the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, food banks and the Breakfast Club of Canada, with which MEES has been partnered since 2018-2019. The education system was provided with letter templates in order to directly inform parents about new pickup locations. The Breakfast Club will resume its activities in schools that gradually reopen.

209. Can school boards use part of their funding for financial assistance to offer gift cards for nearby grocery stores to families in need?

The amounts provided for in the operating budget rules for school boards cannot be transferred to one or more community organizations or to individuals.

210. What about the provisions in the *Education Act* concerning decisions to be made by the governing boards if members are unable to meet in person? Do school administrators have some flexibility to render decisions that are usually made by the governing boards?

Given the exceptional circumstances and to allow decisions to be made in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the government issued Ministerial Order 2020-029 on April 26. This Order from the Minister of Health and Social Services stipulates:

- THAT any meeting, sitting or assembly that takes place in person, including that of a deliberative body, may be held using a means that enables all members to communicate with each other immediately; where the law provides that a sitting must be public, that sitting must be announced as soon as possible by any means that enables the public to know the content of the discussions between participants and the outcome of the deliberation of the members
- THAT, when a secret ballot is required, it may be held by any means of communication agreed on by all persons who are entitled to vote or, failing that, by any means enabling both that votes be gathered in a way that they may be verified afterwards and the preservation of the secret nature of the vote