

Ottawa, August 26, 2020

IMPORTANT UPDATE - HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES FOR BACK TO SCHOOL

Dear parents and guardians,

I hope you and your loved ones are well. You will find in this communication information which will enable you to prepare, with your child, for the return to school. We invite you to read this [checklist of reminders](#), which will allow you to have all the information at hand for the first day of school. This list will be updated regularly and is available on our [Back to School Portal](#).

Health and safety measures for students and staff

The health and safety of our students and staff is our priority. Here is an overview of the health and safety measures in our schools:

- **Self-screening.** We ask that you familiarize yourself with the Symptom Self-Assessment, which you will need to complete every day before your child arrives at school. The self-assessment is available in [English](#) and [French](#), on the Government of Ontario website and on our [Back to School Portal](#).
- **Mask wearing**
 - Students: Wearing a fabric or non-medical mask will be mandatory for all students in grades 4 to 12 and strongly recommended for Kindergarten to grade 3 students in common areas. Wearing a mask is mandatory for 3rd grade students in 3rd-4th grade mixed classes.

To help your child become familiar with wearing the mask, handling and maintaining it, we encourage you to view this [video](#). You will also find a list of good mask-related practices in our reminder list.
- **Staff:** All school staff will wear a medical mask and visor. Window masks will also be available for anyone who requires them or as part of the support they provide to students.
- **School transportation:** Wearing a fabric or non-medical mask will be mandatory for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students on school buses. Wearing a mask will also be compulsory for all drivers.
- **Classrooms.** In order to respect physical distancing, the furniture and the number of desks will be reduced. Area rugs will also be removed. Dividers will be installed in classrooms that have collaborative tables and where physical distance is limited.
- **Cleaning.** All of our schools have a rigorous cleaning and hygiene protocol in place. Cleaning will take place on an increased basis, and frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day and more frequently as needed.

- **Ventilation.** In all CEPEO schools, ventilation systems are checked according to an established inspection schedule and meet provincial standards. Preventive maintenance and filter changes are done regularly. Other measures, such as opening windows and doors, will be used to facilitate ventilation. Washrooms will be ventilated frequently and ventilation will be checked regularly.

Please note that based on the available evidence, there is no indication that COVID-19 can be transmitted by air conditioners or ventilation systems to people in other rooms served by the same heating, ventilation or air conditioning system. In this regard, please consult the Ottawa Public Health question-and-answer sheet (in French) ([Follow the link](#)).

- **Class changes.** Class changes will be made by avoiding contact between the different cohorts.
- **Recess.** Each class will stay with its cohort during recess. There will be no mixed cohorts.
- **Staff training in health and safety.** All of our staff are trained in health and safety measures.
- **Protocol for suspected or confirmed cases (students and employees).** We invite you to read the government directives announced today, August 26, for the management of COVID-19 cases in schools ([Follow the link](#)).

If a sign or symptom of COVID-19 were to be detected in a student or staff member, the latter will be placed in an isolation room, under the supervision of a staff member equipped with personal protective equipment, while waiting to leave school. The isolation room will be closed and located in a location easy to monitor. Since the symptoms of COVID-19 are varied, the government advises sending students home as soon as they feel sick.

Screening tests will not be compulsory for students sent home. The government advises a minimum of 14 days isolation and to see a doctor. If the child is tested and the result is negative, he or she can return to school within 24 hours of the symptoms ending.

In the event of a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in school, management will notify the local public health unit. The local public health unit will conduct contact tracing and designate cohorts at high risk of exposure and requiring isolation.

The school administration will keep a register of individuals in the school on a daily basis. This registry will facilitate contact tracing by public health authorities, should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed.

- **Student in self-isolation.** Any student in self-isolation at home (in the event of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19) will receive a schedule from their teacher in order to continue their learning. Your child's school will provide all the details for this.

Anxiety about returning to school

Any new school year brings on many emotions. This is even truer this year. We invite you to consult the many wellness and mental health resources available on our [Back to School Portal](#). In

particular, you will find avenues for discussion for you and your child to help them prepare calmly and confidently for the start of the school year.

Ottawa Public Health Resources

Ottawa Public Health has posted a series of [back-to-school resources online for students, parents and school staff](#). We encourage you to consult them.

School transportation

School transportation will be operational from the start of the school year on September 3rd. CEPEO schools are not affected by the decision of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) to delay its service, since the latter only serves English-language school boards.

Back to school guide

We invite you to regularly consult the latest updates to our [back to school guide](#) available on our website.

We remind you that your child's school will contact you to share the operating procedures for the start of the school year.

Rest assured that all members of the staff will ensure that this exceptional back-to-school period is carried out with kindness and calm. They will also take care to support your children in this new school reality.

If you have any questions, we invite you to contact your child's school.

I thank you again for your cooperation and hope you enjoy your child's last days of vacation.

Sylvie C. R. Tremblay
Director of Education