



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE
Eastern Townships
SCHOOL BOARD

ETSB Connections

Newsletter



COVID-19

August 2020 – Back to School

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ETSB COVID-19 Back to School

The new school year is right around the corner and we know it will be like no other back to school we have ever experienced. To improve our communication and link with our parents and staff, we are bringing back our monthly newsletter.

For the first few editions this year, we will focus on COVID-19 and the back to school preparation. In this edition, you will find highlights of the Ministry of Education's directives, public health guidelines and how the ETSB is getting ready to greet elementary and secondary students on **Monday August 31st!**

We will continue to share and post the most recent information on our [COVID-19 Back to School 2020](https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/back-to-school-plan-fall-covid-19/) page. Please refer to it often for updates and new information.

MEES Back to School Information

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/back-to-school-plan-fall-covid-19/>

School Attendance

For the return of the 2020-2021 school year, there will be compulsory in school attendance for all students in preschool, elementary and secondary school.

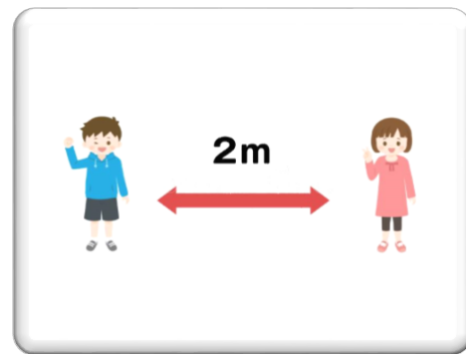
The first day of classes will be Monday, August 31st. The regular [ETSB school calendar](#) will be followed.



Students who have a specific medical condition that makes them more vulnerable to COVID-19, as confirmed by a physician, may be eligible to attend on-line learning. This exemption also extends to students who reside with someone who has a specific medical condition that makes them more vulnerable to COVID-19. If this pertains to your child, please contact your child's school. Documented proof from a physician is required.

Sanitary Measures & Social Distancing

- Hand washing and enhanced sanitary measures will be implemented in all schools.
- Students in the same group (class) will not be required to social distance with each other.
- Students will be required to keep a 2-meter social distance from adults.
- Students will be required to keep a 1-meter social distance from students outside of their grouping (class).
- Preschool students do not have to social distance, but preschool staff will have extra protective gear.
- Students will remain in their classroom and staff members will move from one class to the other.
- Students should bring a full water bottle to school.



Masks

All students* from cycle 3 elementary (grade 5) to secondary 5 **must** wear a mask in all common areas while inside the school building (hallways, staircases, bathrooms, entering and exiting the building, etc.). Wearing a mask will not be mandatory for students when they are in their classroom with the students in their grouping (class).

Parents are responsible for supplying their child with masks for school. They are considered part of the supply list and a consumable to be paid for by parents.



As well, any visitors (including parents) must wear a mask at school at all times unless they are in the theatre or auditorium and can maintain at least a 1.5-meter social distance.

*Students, who due to a cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability, an autism spectrum disorder, an addiction problem or a severe mental health problem, are unable to understand the requirement or for whom wearing a mask or face covering causes significant disorganization or distress, will not be required to wear a mask. Please discuss this with your child's school.

For information on masks, how to wear them, how to make them, etc., visit the Quebec.ca website [Wearing a mask or a face covering in public settings in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)



School Transportation

To respect the directives issued by Public Health, the capacity on school buses will be reduced. Only two students will be allowed per seat unless they are siblings that live together. All students from cycle 3 elementary (grade 5) and up **must** have a mask and wear it on the bus. *As well, it is strongly recommended that all students wear a mask*

Walking distances (1.6 km) will be enforced as per the transportation policy; therefore if your child has had bus transportation in the past as a courtesy, this will not be the case for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Hand sanitizer will be available for students when they get on and off the bus.

All school buses will be thoroughly cleaned between the morning and afternoon bus runs and at the end of the day.

Under the current circumstances, some parents may prefer to drive their child to and from school. If so, we ask that you let our transportation department know as soon as possible to assist us in organizing the routes. If transportation is not necessary for the upcoming school year, please email <mailto:transportation@etsb.qc.ca>

What to do if your child shows symptoms:

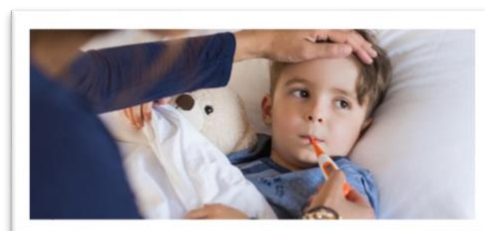
If your child shows symptoms of COVID-19, contact **1-877-644-4545** as soon as possible. Your child must stay home in isolation until you receive further instructions from public health.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:	
Fever <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38°C (100.4 °F) or higher: rectal temperature in children under 5 OR oral temperature in children 5 or older and adults • or 1.1°C higher than the person’s usual temperature 	General symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major fatigue • Significant loss of appetite • General muscle pain (not related to physical exertion)
Respiratory symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cough (new or worse) • Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing • Sore throat 	Gastrointestinal symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting • Diarrhea
<p>While flu-like symptoms may appear similar to those of COVID-19, they are not a sure sign of this virus. However, it is recommended that you keep your child at home and avoid contact with other people until you have received the public health guidelines.</p>	

What if there is a case in your child’s school?

If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in your child’s school, the school will follow the directives of Public Health. All parents and staff will be notified when there is a confirmed case. Anyone considered to be at moderate to high-risk will be removed from the school and tested. Please note that it is the Public Health officials that will determine who is at risk and at what level.

For more information, please visit the [Quebec.ca website](https://www.quebec.ca).



Non-COVID related...

Transportation News

New this year, school bus information is available on-line. Bus information will only be mailed out to preschool and kindergarten students. To know when and where your child will catch their bus, go to the transportation page on our website. As we are updating bus routes, please check the website frequently for updates.

Also new this year is a revised [transportation pamphlet](#) that highlights some of the aspects of the new Transportation Policy that came into effect as of July 1st.

Water Testing

As you may be aware, the Quebec government announced plans to reduce the amount of acceptable lead levels in drinking water. As part of this initiative, the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (MEES) instructed all school boards in the province to follow up by testing lead content in the water points.

The ETSB has completed the testing in all of its elementary schools, having taken samples from 195 water points. The results showed that of those points tested, 162 conformed to Health Canada standards of less than 5.0 micrograms of lead and 33 did not conform. Of those that did not conform, 23 required the water to run for 1 minute to flush the system and 10 had to be closed.

Our buildings and grounds department has been working diligently over the summer to repair and replace all non-conforming points for the start of the new school year.

As per the MEES directives, secondary schools will be tested this fall with a March 1st deadline.

General Assemblies and Governing Board Elections

If you are interested in being on the governing board, please check with your child's school to see when they will be holding their general assembly and governing board elections.

As you may have heard, the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA), of which the ETSB is part of, has a court challenge underway to stop the implementation of Bill 40 for English school boards.

Therefore, the ETSB remains a school board until the judgment is rendered, unlike its Francophone colleagues who became a school service centre in June 2020.

For parents and employees, only those who are on a school/centre governing board will be eligible to sit on an administrative council if the ETSB does indeed change governance. This year, to meet the deadlines for a possible election on November 1st, all Governing Board elections must be completed by September 18th.

We are looking forward to greeting students on their first day of school. Wishing everyone a great back to school and a wonderful 2020-2021 school year!