



# **St. Francis Elementary 2020-2021**

## **COVID-19 Back to School Procedures for Parents**

A summary of our expectations and guidelines for welcoming you back to a safe and healthy academic year.

## **A Message from the St. Francis School Team**

The St. Francis' school team has been working to establish healthy and safe practices which will help to protect all members of our community when we return to school. These practices are based on press releases and documents received over the last few weeks from the office of our Education Minister, Mr. Roberge. We would like to reassure you that all protocols that are in place to date as well as any future updates, are based on the scientific facts known at this time. Please note that these protocols and expectations may change as the COVID-19 situation evolves. ETSB will communicate changes as they are received from the office of the Minister of Education as well as the Department of Public Health.

We hope that by providing you with an overview of the latest measures that have been put in place and the expectations that we have for our students, staff and families with regards to COVID-19, this summary will address your concerns surrounding your child's return to class.

This document was prepared using resources and guidelines provided to us from Health Canada, the Quebec Ministry of Education, CNESST and the ETSB.

We are looking forward to seeing our students back in school and welcome the opportunity to work with you to make this year a success.

Sincerely,

The St. Francis School Team

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## Class Start-Up

- All students at St. Francis Elementary School are required to return to school full-time.
- Students in Pre-kindergarten (age 4) and Kindergarten (age 5) will have a progressive entry plan. Parents received the start dates for their children over the summer. If you have not received this information, please contact the school at (819) 826-3737 x. 11801 or email your child's teachers.
- Your child will stay with their homeroom class all day.
- Teachers will move from one classroom to another.
- Students must have their own school supplies (School Supply Lists were sent home or emailed the last day of school and are posted on our school website). The sharing of school supplies will not be permitted. In an effort to minimize the transfer of germs between home and school, materials including classroom and library books will not be going home at this time.
- Cafeteria services will begin on September 8th. Hot lunches will be served with extra precautions implemented. A menu will be posted on the school website during the first week of school and a copy will be sent home the first day of school to complete and return with your orders and payment for the month.
- We will stagger 3 \* 20 minute lunch hours to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria at the same time.
- In Physical Education, the year will begin focusing on outdoor activities (**rain or shine**) with accommodations made to meet the social distancing expectations. Students will not be required to change for Physical Education. Please make sure that your child is dressed comfortably on Phys. Ed. days.
- There will be no sick room available this year. If your child is feeling under the weather, please keep him/her home. As per government guidelines, there will be an isolation room available for students presenting with any form of illness. When this happens, the government COVID-19 protocol will be followed. This protocol will be explained in detail on page 9.
- Fitness in Grade 1 and 2: Students will participate with their respective classmates either in the fitness room, outside or in the gymnasium during fitness blocks.

- Passion Blocks (Grade 3 – 6): Although we cannot run Passion Blocks as they are intended, we will look at a way to structure these so that each group of students will be introduced to the various passions within their respective class groups.

## **Social/Physical Distancing Measures/Expectations**

Social/Physical distancing is important for minimizing the possibility of coming into contact with germs from infected individuals.

- Students are required to maintain a distance of at least 1 metre at all times when in proximity to students not within their homeroom group.
- Staff are required to maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from others.
- Any physical contact is to be avoided at all times (handshakes, hugs, etc.)
- Students in grade 5 and 6 are required to wear a mask while outside of their classroom and when a 2 metre distance cannot be respected while in the classroom. For example, if your child requires assistance at his/her desk – the teacher and child will be required to wear a mask.
- We will modify classes or activities to minimize close social/physical contact. If and when noon hour clubs run, they may be meeting virtually.
- We will reduce congestion in hallways/common areas during breaks, recess and lunch hours with the staggered lunch periods.
- We will promote social distancing by including signage such as:
  - floor markings indicating which side of the hall to circulate
  - floor markings indicating 1 metre distances where line-ups may occur (Main Office, washrooms)
  - symbols for travelling up and down staircases.
- Field trips or assemblies in the gym will not be occurring in the near future. In the case of assemblies, these will be held virtually or as direct meetings in the respective classrooms.
- Plexiglass is present in the Secretary's office, the cafeteria, as well as in the Student Service Office area.

- **Non-essential visitors to the school will be limited. We ask that parents visit the school only when absolutely necessary.**

If necessary, the parent must:

1. Call the secretary to make an appointment,
2. Wear a mask
3. Ring the doorbell and enter at door number 3
4. Sanitize their hands
5. Immediately report to the Secretary's Office on the second floor.

## Masks

Masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Masks should:
  - fit comfortably without large gaps or openings on the side.
  - cover both the nose and the mouth.
  - not have air vents.
  - be washed before a second use.
  - not be used the next day if it is a disposable mask.
- It is **recommended** that students in **Preschool and Elementary grades 1-4** wear a face mask on the bus but are not required to wear one at school.
- Students in **grades 5 and 6** are **required** to wear a face mask on the bus, in common areas at school, or when in close proximity to others. They will not be required to wear it when eating or drinking in the cafeteria.
- The school will not be providing masks for students. It is suggested that your child have a couple of face masks in his/her possession each day.
- It is recommended that students have a container/bag in which to store their mask when not in use.
- Staff will be required to wear masks in the classroom when they are within 2 metres of a student.

- Staff will be required to wear masks when in the hallways and in student common areas.
- Proper mask use will be reviewed with the students on the first day of classes.

## Hygiene Expectations and Cleaning Procedures

While frequent hand washing for 20 seconds with lukewarm water and soap is the most effective way of getting rid of dirt **and** destroying any germs that may be lingering on your hands, rubbing your hands with hand sanitizers containing at least a 60% hydro-alcoholic solution also limits the risk of transmitting the virus.

- Sanitizing stations will be positioned at the designated entrances to the school. Everyone entering and exiting the building will be required to sanitize their hands.
- Each classroom will have either a sink with soap, or a bottle of hand sanitizer. Everyone will be expected to wash or sanitize their hands:
  - when they **enter** or **exit** a room.
  - after using the washroom
  - before and after eating lunch
  - before and after breaks
  - before and after Phys. Ed
- Each classroom will have a bottle of disinfectant to clean desks and frequently touched surfaces.
- Social distancing signage placed on the floor outside each washroom must be followed. Only one student is allowed in the washroom at a time.
- Signs are posted in the washrooms indicating proper hand washing.
- Proper hand washing and use of hand sanitizers will be reviewed with students on the first day of class.
- Proper respiratory hygiene and etiquette (covering for coughs and sneezes, not touching mouth, nose or eyes) will be reviewed on the first day of class.
- Classrooms will be cleaned at least twice a day.
- All homeroom classes have windows that can be opened, allowing for the circulation of fresh air.

- Students are required to bring a reusable water bottle for drinking. There will be no access to the water fountains. There is only one water bottle filling station on the first floor near the entrance to the library.
- Students are not to share food or beverages.
- Students will be asked to bring home and dispose of all food containers/wrappers/compost from food consumed at lunch time.

## **Absentee Protocol Expectation**

Given the present virus situation, we must take particular precautions to ensure that children are not coming to school with COVID-19 symptoms. We ask that you notify the school **in the morning before 8:45 am**, on the day that your child is absent. You can speak with Tamara Porter or you may leave a voice message at (819) 826-3737 x. 11801 or send an e-mail to:

[stf-secretary@etsb.qc.ca](mailto:stf-secretary@etsb.qc.ca).

*Please be specific as to the reason for your child's absence.*

## **COVID-19 procedures for parents to follow if symptoms present at home**

Cold symptoms and COVID-19 symptoms can be very similar. Should your child develop cold symptoms at home, your child cannot come to school. The government guidelines state that you are to isolate your child at home, call 1-877-644-4545 as soon as possible and follow the instructions given to you by public health.

- Symptoms to monitor for at home:
  - A fever of 38 °C (100.4 °F) or higher or 1.1 °C higher than the child's normal temperature.
  - Extreme fatigue
  - A noticeable reduction in appetite



- General muscular pain or discomfort not associated with physical activity
- A new and aggravating cough
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- In addition, your child cannot be in school if:
  - You or anyone in your household has received directives from public health to isolate at home.
  - If there is the possibility that your child has been in contact with a person tested positive for COVID-19.
  - If you are in quarantine following a trip outside the country.
- Students required to stay home under public health guidelines will be provided with remote pedagogical support when the child is well enough.
- Please remember, you must inform the school in the morning of any absence and the reason for the absence.
- Presently, it is our understanding that the Department of Public Health will notify the parents and the school when the child can return to school.

## **COVID-19 procedures to be followed if a child presents symptoms at school**

Parent vigilance will play an important role in limiting the impact of COVID-19 on our school community. We encourage parents/guardians to closely monitor their child for symptoms at home and “screen” their child each morning for any symptoms of COVID-19. Children exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms may not come to school. The government has given us strict protocols to follow should a child begin exhibiting symptoms at school.

- The child is automatically accompanied to a designated sanitized isolation room while wearing a mask and will continue to wear a mask until he/she has left the building.

- A single staff member will accompany the child and stay with the child until a parent/guardian or the emergency contact person comes to pick up the child. **A symptomatic child will not be permitted to remain at school or take bus transportation home.**
- The person accompanying the child to the isolation room will have received instruction on how to monitor the child as well as instruction on the proper donning and removal of the Personal Protective Equipment required when in contact with a possibly infected person.
- Once the child has left the building, the isolation room will be ventilated, cleaned and disinfected.
- The parent/guardian must call 1-877-644-4545 as soon as possible and follow the public health guidelines that are provided. The child showing symptoms must remain in isolation at home until public health guidelines have been received. You will find a government document outlining this protocol in the appendix.
- Students leaving school because of COVID-19 symptoms will only return to school once the Department of Public Health has notified the parents and the school that the child is no longer contagious.
- In the absence of a COVID-19 diagnosis, students and staff that have flu-like symptoms may return to school once **both** of the following two conditions have been met:
  - 48 hours has passed without a fever (without taking medication)
  - AND**
  - 24 hours after a significant improvement in all other symptoms.

## **Protocol to be followed when a student or staff tests positive**

In the event that a student or staff member should test positive for COVID-19 the following government protocol will be followed:

- All parents and staff will be contacted when a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in the school.
- Anyone considered to be at moderate to high risk of having been exposed to the virus will be removed from the school and be tested.

- The parent of a child who tests positive for COVID-19 must call 1-877-644-4545 as soon as possible and follow the public health guidelines that will be provided.
- Students who must remain isolated at home will be provided with remote pedagogical support.
- Contact tracing effectively and quickly becomes very important in the event that there are several cases of COVID-19 in our school. Should there be several cases of COVID-19 in the same class or in several classes:
  - ❑ The regional public health authorities provide the school with detailed instructions and the school has the responsibility to contact the parents, legal guardians and staff members who must be notified.
  - ❑ In collaboration with the school administration, the regional public health authorities make the recommendations as to whether a classroom or school should be closed based on the situation.
  - ❑ With help from the administration, teachers, school staff and the student concerned or their parents, the public health authorities will determine any close contacts that occurred at the school.
  - ❑ Anyone considered to be at moderate to high risk is removed from the school and is tested.
  - ❑ Any students required to isolate at home will be provided with remote pedagogical support.
  - ❑ A student or staff member with a positive COVID-19 result will be required to remain at home until the Department of Public Health has contacted them and the school to confirm they are no longer contagious.

## **Students with medical exemptions**

We would ask that students that have or anticipate having a medical exemption from attending school, contact the school as soon as possible.

- Medical exemptions will only be granted when accompanied by a note from a doctor.
- Arrangements regarding remote pedagogical support will be provided.

## **Protocol for a possible second school closure**

To be prepared in the event of a second school closure due to COVID-19, we will be sending home a short survey regarding the availability of Wi-Fi and devices in your home. Please complete this survey and return it to your child's homeroom teacher to help us better prepare for such an event.

If a school closure were to occur again: all grade 5 and 6 students would be sent home with their assigned Chromebooks. Those with younger brothers and sisters will be required to share if there is no device other than a cell phone at home.

There are a limited number of older devices that we would send home with those students who do not have brothers/sisters in grade 5 or 6, and whose parents indicate that there is no device other than a cell phone available in the home.

In the case where you have no Wi-Fi or limited accessibility to Wi-Fi, we would organize for routers to be distributed with a Chromebook per household.

Your child will be required to attend a virtual classroom session for a set time per day predetermined by the Ministry of Education, followed by independent work to complete before the next day's lesson. Students would need to be ready to ask questions during the virtual classroom session the next day.

Students in grades 1 – 6 are registered on IXL. This will be very helpful if we are required to follow a distance education model.

As well, students in kindergarten, grade 1 and 2 have access to RAZ-KIDS (a website that provides access to levelled reading materials and assignments).

We are in the process of preparing/finalizing our distance education model and protocol which will be put in place in the event that we are required to shut down the entire school once again. We are committed to ensuring that our students will have quick access (within 24 hours) to continued learning and academic support as

well as providing the emotional support necessary for the mental well-being of our vulnerable students. We will be sharing the details of this plan as soon as it is finalized. The success of such a plan is in part dependent on having accurate information regarding your child's access to the internet and the technological devices that can be used to communicate with your child's teacher.

We hope that this document has answered many of your questions and addressed some of your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have additional questions.

# Appendix

St. Francis School website: <http://stfrancis.etsb.qc.ca/>

<http://Quebec.ca/coronavirus>

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