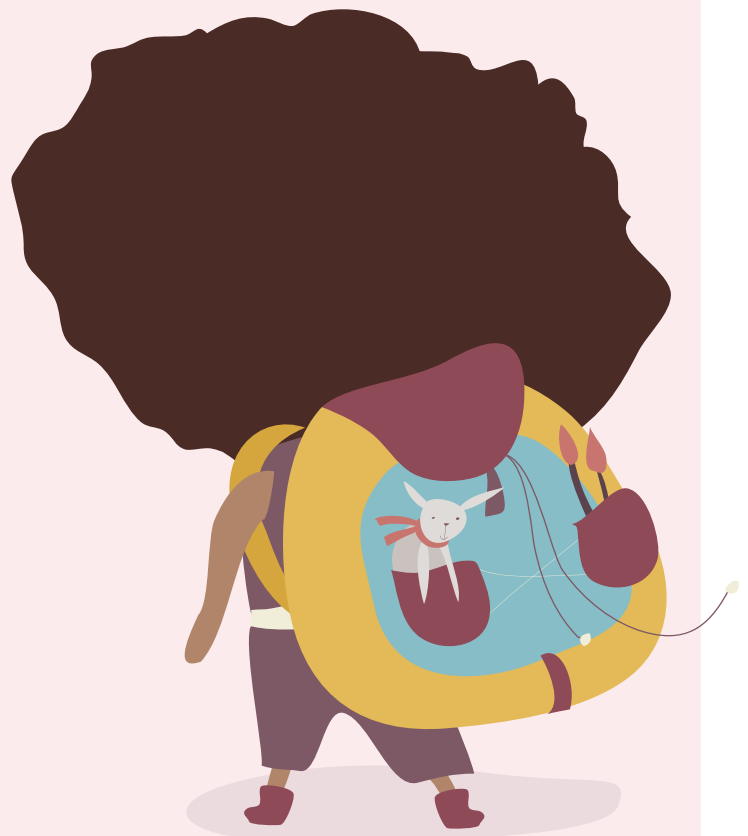
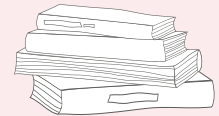


COVID-19

August 28, 2020

BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE 2020



Québec students are going back to school at the end of the summer, after a tumultuous end to the school year because of COVID-19.

This return to school in the midst of a pandemic raises many questions with feelings of relief and happy times for some, but apprehension or anxiety for others.

This back to school guide is therefore intended as a reference tool for families. It was designed to inform parents and children about health-related topics that may be of concern in this exceptional context, and to provide practical information to facilitate the daily lives of families.

Since the situation is constantly changing, we suggest that you also keep up-to-date on new information.



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A CHU SAINTE-JUSTINE PUBLICATION

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COVID-19 AND CHILDREN

COVID-19 IN CHILDREN

COVID-19 appears to pose a much lower risk to children compared to adults.

Infants, children and adolescents are not significantly affected by the virus. When they are affected by it, they are less prone to developing complications and, if they do, they are usually mild.



TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND IN A FAMILY

Unlike influenza, young children (0 to 9 years) with fewer symptoms of COVID-19 appear less contagious than adults and are not recognized as major vectors of transmission.



ENSURING THE SAFETY OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

MEDICALLY VULNERABLE CHILDREN

There is still little scientific data on COVID-19 in children with chronic conditions (including diabetes and asthma¹). **At this time, they do not seem to be infected more easily than children who do not have health problems, and they do not appear to develop complications more frequently than healthy children.**

Although children with chronic illnesses are more likely to be hospitalized so they can be monitored, these children are not at higher risk of being admitted to the intensive care unit and do not develop more severe complications.

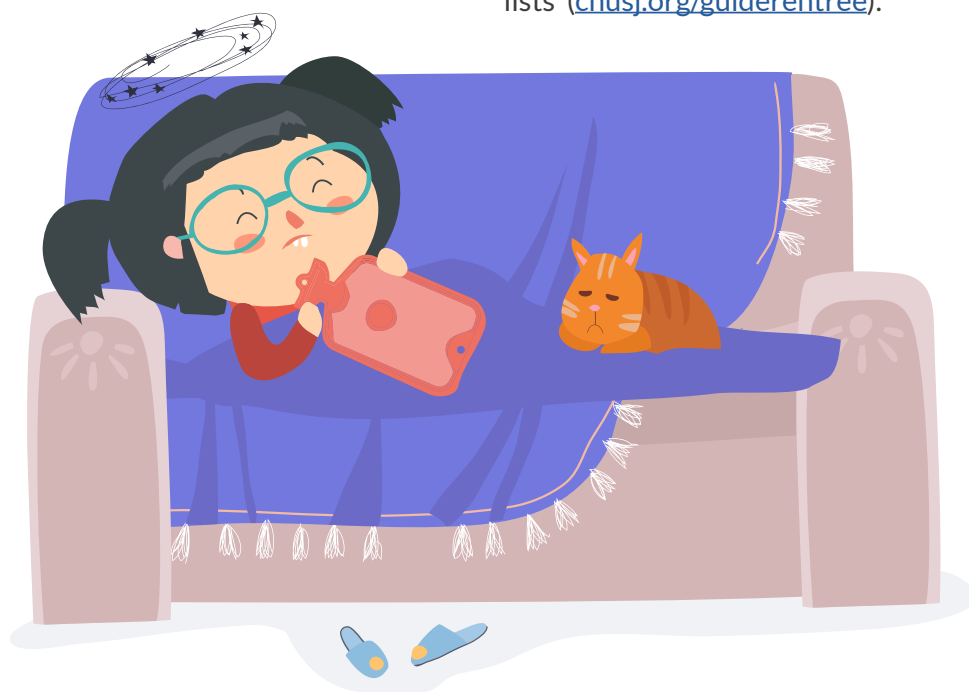
Additionally, current data does not appear to show an increased risk of severe disease in immunocompromised individuals.

Nevertheless, it is likely that children at risk of complications from usual viral infections (influenza, respiratory syncytial virus, etc.) are more likely to be at risk for complications from infection with COVID-19.

Attendance at school is mandatory for all children starting in September, except for those with a condition of vulnerability². A doctor's note will be required. The note must include the conditions that justify the child's absence from the school.

For children whose conditions prevent them from attending school, educational services and follow-ups will be implemented to provide appropriate learning remotely.

If your child is followed for a specific illness, do not hesitate to discuss his situation with his doctor or health care team if you feel the need. You can also visit our website to read the recommendations of our specialists (chusj.org/guiderentree).



¹ Read the recommendations of The Association of Allergists and Immunologists of Québec, the Association des Pédiatres du Québec and the Association des Pneumologues de la province de Québec on the return to school or day care for asthmatic children. <https://www.chusj.org/CORPO/files/29/290db313-d099-4cc5-907d-dd5c51b17c7b.pdf>

² <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-002604/>

ENSURING THE SAFETY OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE (CONT.)

PARENT IN FRAIL HEALTH

Chaque cas est unique. Nous vous conseillons de parler avec votre médecin si vous avez des questions ou des préoccupations en lien avec votre santé dans le contexte de la rentrée scolaire.

PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 70 IN THE FAMILY CIRCLE

It is beneficial for both children and grandparents to be close. Without completely stopping seeing each other, certain preventive measures should be respected to protect those 70 years of age or older who might be in contact with a child who attends school.

Basic preventive measures are necessary, including hand-washing.

The most important measure remains avoiding direct contact which helps to reduce the potential spread of the virus.

We therefore suggest that you avoid touching hands and hugging, for example, and that you maintain a distance of two metres. A child can easily give a short hug to an adult, without putting the health of the adult at risk. It is also preferable to see each other outside, if possible.

In some situations, such as in a closed public space, wearing a mask may be preferred at times.



PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

REMINDER OF THE SYMPTOMS OF THE VIRUS

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to those of the flu and the cold.

Children seen at CHU Sainte-Justine presented with one or more of the following symptoms:

SYMPTÔMES	TOTAL (n=104)	Younger than 5 years (n=49)	5 years and over (n=55)
Fever	73 (70,2 %)	41 (83,8 %)	32 (58,2 %)
Gastrointestinal symptoms	50 (48,1 %)	23 (46,9 %)	27 (49,1 %)
Lower respiratory symptoms (cough and difficulty breathing)	45 (42,0 %)	17(35,0 %)	29 (49,0 %)
General deterioration of health	26 (25,0 %)	1 (2,0 %)	25 (45,5 %)
Runny nose	24 (23,1 %)	7 (14,3 %)	17 (30,9 %)
Vomiting	22 (21,2 %)	12 (24,5 %)	10 (18,2 %)
Sore throat	14 (13,5 %)	4 (8,2 %)	10 (18,2 %)
Diarrhea	14 (13,5 %)	8 (16,3 %)	6 (10,9 %)
Abdominal pain	14 (13,5 %)	3 (6,1 %)	11(20,0 %)
Lower respiratory symptoms without fever (toux et difficultés respiratoires)	11 (10,6 %)	3 (6,1 %)	8 (14,5 %)
Gastrointestinal symptoms without fever	9 (8,7 %)	4 (8,2 %)	5 (9,1 %)
Acute respiratory symptoms without fever (runny nose, stuffy nose or sore throat)	7 (6,7 %)	1 (2,0 %)	6 (10,9 %)
Loss of sense of smell	5 (4,8 %)	N/A	5 (9,1 %)

Data provided by Fatima Kakkar and her infectious pediatrics team at CHU Sainte-Justine.
The presence of one symptom does not exclude the presence of one or more other symptoms.



PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS (CONT.)

The most commonly reported symptom was fever, followed by gastrointestinal symptoms and lower respiratory symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing. It should be noted that these symptoms may also present without a fever. Although rhinorrhea (runny nose) does not appear to be a common symptom of COVID-19, it was found in nearly one quarter (25%) of the children, especially in older children where nearly one third had a runny nose.

It is important to monitor these symptoms every morning in all members of the household. If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, he should not go to school (more information on the page *When I should keep my child home from school in the morning*).



REMINDER OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Here are some simple steps that help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

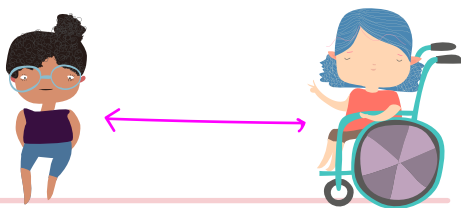
Follow public health recommendations.



Wash your hands (with soap and water for 20 seconds or with an alcohol-based disinfectant) before eating, after using the washroom, after blowing your nose or touching your face, and before going to sleep.

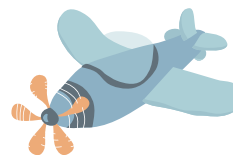


Avoid touching your face with your hands as well as the faces of others (including your child) unless they are clean.



Keep a distance of two metres from others.

If this is not possible, wear a mask, particularly on public transit and in closed or partially covered public spaces (10 years and older).



Avoid contact with anyone who has travelled in the last 14 days.



Avoid contact with anyone who has one or more COVID-19 symptoms.



Be aware of the appearance of any symptoms. Once symptoms(s) appear, call **1-877-644-4545** for a screening appointment.

WEARING A MASK AT SCHOOL¹



For students in **preschool and elementary school up to and including grade 4, a mask is permitted (but not mandatory)** in common areas and on school buses.

A mask is required from grade 5 to high school for moving about in common areas, on school buses and in the presence of students from different classes/groups. The mask can then be removed once the child is seated in the classroom or in specialized areas such as the gym, cafeteria, library, etc.

On public transit, a mask is mandatory from 10 years of age.

Parents are responsible for providing a mask for their child. It is recommended that a minimum of two masks be provided and they should ideally be stored in a paper bag or envelope. If the child forgets his mask, the school can provide one from its supply, but this should be on an exceptional basis only.

All visitors, including parents, must wear a mask. They can only remove the mask once they are sitting to eat, drink or during a presentation where the distance of 1.5 metres between people is respected.

All staff, from preschool to high school, must wear a mask while moving around because it is more difficult to respect distances.

In college and university facilities, masks are required when moving around, but can be removed once seated as long as physical distancing can be respected.



¹<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/port-du-couvre-visage-dans-les-lieux-publics-en-contexte-de-la-pandemie-de-covid-19/>

WEARING A MASK AT SCHOOL (CONT.)

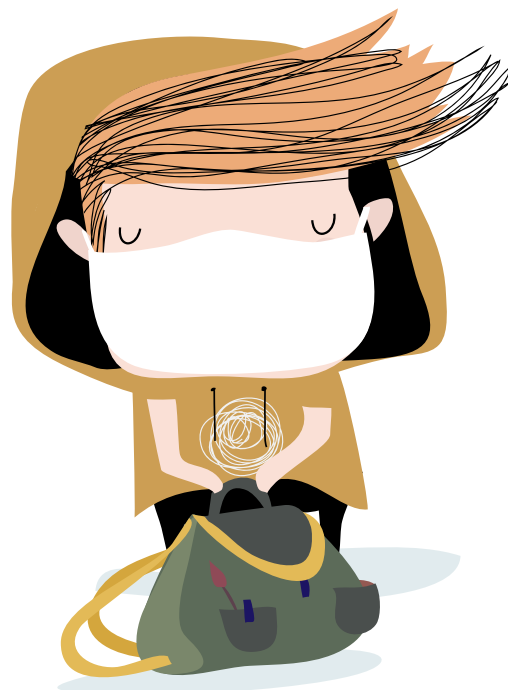
REMEMBER THAT WEARING A MASK DOES NOT REPLACE INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES SUCH AS PHYSICAL DISTANCING, HAND-WASHING AND AVOIDING TOUCHING YOUR FACE.

A FEW GENERAL CONCEPTS

Children are usually able to wear a face mask or face covering from the age of 2 years. However, this should only be done in exceptional situations. If wearing a mask causes the child to constantly touch his mask or face, it is probably best not to wear one. This type of behaviour can very well continue until the age of 6 or 7, and varies significantly from one child to another.

Masks protect the people around us, and partially protect us from other people. This protection varies depending on the type of mask.

Wearing a visor alone (without a mask) is not recommended because it does not protect the person wearing the visor or other people in the vicinity. Wearing a visor in addition to a mask is not recommended because it is considered unnecessary if everyone is wearing a mask.



CHILD DEVELOPMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

Children and teenagers have taken advantage of the confinement period to organize themselves, or plant a vegetable garden, perfect their skills in cooking, music, photography or visual arts. Many have learned to enjoy being present in the moment more, enjoy the arrival of spring, marvel at nature or indulge in reading. Many have had the opportunity to attend school, others will have enjoyed privileged relationships with teachers involved in distance learning. Along with their parents and siblings, many children will have formed soothing relationships, extended their meal times, shared values or sports activities which they had done less prior to the pandemic. In short, many will have enjoyed beautiful family moments together.

Other children will have had more difficult, even painful experiences. The pandemic has complicated the daily lives of families, all the more so for those who were vulnerable, less affluent or more unstable. Parents may have been more anxious or depressed, some may have lost their jobs, and others argued. For some children and adolescents, months of missed professional services will have highlighted their physical impairments, developmental delays or learning disorders. Excessive screen time will have caused difficulty sleeping. Depriving them of school and contact with friends, the cessation of team sports, cancellation of holiday plans or the impossibility of joining a day camp may have irritated or bored them, or made them less motivated. Finally, some will have lost a grandparent to whom they could not say goodbye.

With the presence of loving and secure adults, with the opportunity to rediscover their academic life and ties with their teachers and classmates, with increased opportunities for talking, resuming an active life and satisfying their healthy curiosity about COVID, most of them will continue to build their self-confidence and trust in others and the world, even if they are upset. For their part, the professionals at CHU Sainte-Justine promise to support and care for those COVID has left behind or on whom it has left its developmental, family or social marks. By following the plan, with clearheadedness and wisdom, the experience will be made easier and children will gradually regain their lives as children.

FOR THEIR PART, THE PROFESSIONALS AT CHU SAINTE-JUSTINE PROMISE TO SUPPORT AND CARE FOR THOSE COVID HAS LEFT BEHIND OR ON WHOM IT HAS LEFT ITS DEVELOPMENTAL, FAMILY OR SOCIAL MARKS.



DAILY ACTIVITIES

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT COVID-19

With the constant presence of COVID-19 in the media and in discussions, it is recommended that you talk to your child about it if you have not already done so.



HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU :

Say that **COVID-19** is a new contagious influenza-like disease that has appeared around the world, but is usually mild in children.

Ask your child what he knows about this disease, and what he hears in school—it is important to correct misconceptions.

Use simple words based on your child's age.

Name the symptoms, without being alarming.

Stay positive by saying that doctors and researchers are working to find solutions, remedies and vaccines.

Use this opportunity to teach your child how to sneeze or cough into his elbow and how to use a disposable tissue to blow his nose or sneeze.

Answer his questions and do not hesitate to say that you do not know the answer.

WHEN I SHOULD KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL IN THE MORNING

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ONE OR MORE OF THE SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 OR HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS CONTRACTED COVID-19, IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

1

Keep the child
at home

2

Visit
covid19.quebec.ca
to get a screening
appointment

Call 1-877-644-4545
if needed

3

Notify the
school

4

The child must
stay home until test
results are received.



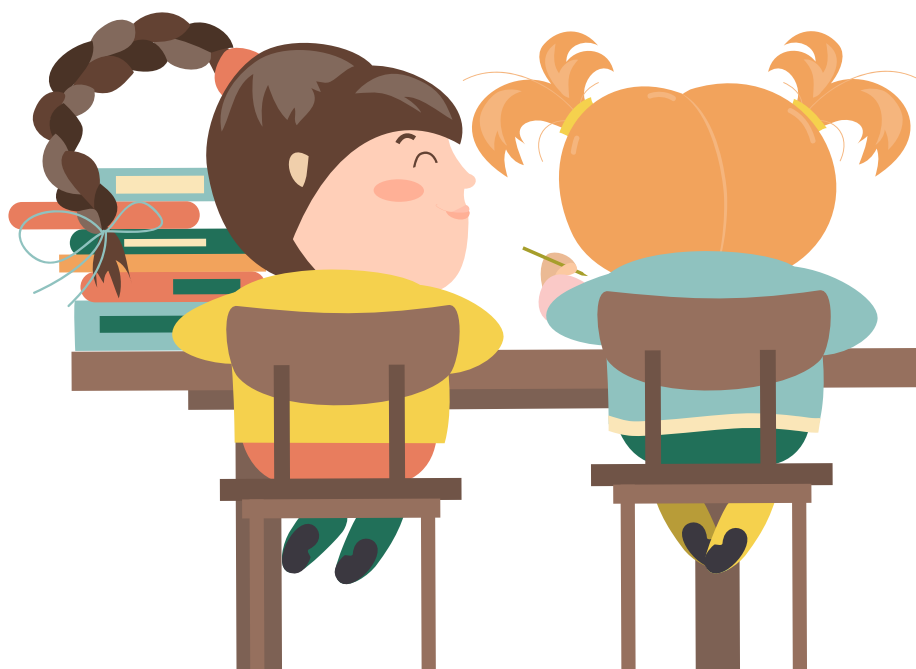
WHEN I SHOULD KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL IN THE MORNING (CONT.)

If your child's test is positive for COVID-19, he or she must stay home.

The parent will then receive a call from public health to provide guidance. Distance education support will be offered for the child. The student will only be able to return to school after the symptoms have disappeared and the student has observed 14 days of isolation or in accordance with public health recommendations.

If your child returns from a foreign trip, he must also comply with quarantine measures.

If a parent experiences one or more of the symptoms associated with COVID-19, the procedure is the same. The parent should also wear a mask and isolate themselves from other family members as much as possible.



TO SUMMARIZE, IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD EXPERIENCES ONE OR MORE SYMPTOMS OF THE VIRUS, IS WAITING FOR A TEST RESULT, OR HAS COVID, THEY SHOULD STAY HOME AND FOLLOW PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS.

TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOL

IF POSSIBLE, ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION IS RECOMMENDED: THIS INCLUDES WALKING, CYCLING, ETC.



You could also use your personal car to drive your child, alone or with some friends (always the same friends, as in a bubble), keeping a distance of one metre between each of the children.

Face masks are mandatory on school buses for students in the 5th and 6th grades of elementary school and for all high school students. It is permitted for preschool and 1st and 2nd grade

elementary school students. A maximum of two children are allowed per bench seat. Antiseptic gel will be made available at the entrance of vehicles.

On public transit, masks have been mandatory from 10 years of age since August 24, 2020.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

To learn more about the organization of school activities, health measures in place in schools, on school buses, how recreation and child care services are organized, measures to protect school staff, and other topics related to measures in schools, you can review the section on this subject on the government of Quebec website. <https://www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/reponses-questions-coronavirus-covid19/questions-reponses-education-famille-covid-19/>

The **school attended by your child** or the school service centre in your area should also provide you with information about this.



PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN WHEN RETURNING FROM SCHOOL

YOUR CHILD SHOULD WASH HIS HANDS AS SOON AS HE RETURNS HOME.

Complying with health measures in use, such as washing hands on arriving at home, before eating and after using the washroom are sufficient in this context.

There is a risk of being infected with the virus by touching contaminated surfaces and objects, but it is a slight risk. You can therefore keep doing things as usual :



Your child keep his clothing on when he arrives from school;



His coat can be stored in its usual place;



Laundry can continue to be done in the usual manner;



His backpack can be washed when it is dirty, as is normally done;



Instructions for measures related to school materials will be provided by your child's school, but can also be brought home.

TIPS FOR MEALS

IF YOUR CHILD CAN EAT AT HOME, IT MAY BE BEST TO CHOOSE THIS OPTION. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, STUDENTS AND STAFF CAN BRING THEIR OWN MEALS.

Otherwise, each school will determine how it organizes meal times.

VOICI DES TRUCS QUAND VIENT L'HEURE DU LUNCH :

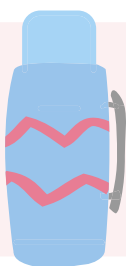


Wash hands before eating:

You can include small wet washcloths in your child's lunch box;



Keep a distance from friends while eating (at least 1 metre, ideally 2 metres);



If possible, use a thermos rather than the microwave to reheat hot meals;

Do not share meals or exchange lunch box items;



Wash the lunch box regularly, as you normally would.

HELP THE CHILDREN WHO ARE EXPERIENCING ANXIETY



The pandemic brings its own set of unforeseen situations, new circumstances and lack of control over things, all of which can result in extra stress to that of a usual back-to-school experience. This is all the more true if your child is anxious by nature and/or has a specific medical condition, academic challenges or experiences anxiety with parental separation. Some children will be more agitated, demanding, angry or difficult, while others will tend to keep to themselves, have trouble sleeping or separating from you.

HELP THE CHILDREN WHO ARE EXPERIENCING ANXIETY (CONT.)

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD MANAGE STRESS AND ANXIETY



Welcome his emotions without judgment and validate them. If your child tells you that he is afraid, you can say that you understand what he is feeling. If he cannot express his concerns in words, you can help him with this. Avoid denying or trivializing his fears. Also avoid panic with what he tells you or transmitting your own fears too much. Your reaction will influence him. Your child can also express his experiences through drawings or an intimate journal.



Be reassuring. After listening to him, you can explore solutions with a reassuring attitude.



Inform him of the measures in place and plan for unforeseen events. Provide concrete information about what is planned in the school. Keep in mind that there will be adjustments over time, particularly based on public health guidelines. If possible, anticipate how you will manage if your child gets sick. Look for support from other parents or your network as needed.



Maintaining a good life balance (rest, good nutrition, physical exercise, relaxation) helps you to better cope with stress. Establish a routine and avoid too many changes in lifestyle habits, especially in the first few weeks after school starts.



Include humour and time for fun. To help unwind, tell the family about the annoying, but funny situations involving health measures (forgetting to remove your mask before eating, having to use a disinfectant gel that stinks). Also include time for fun and games, to “forget” about the pandemic and enjoy being in the moment.



See the pandemic as an adventure and build some self-confidence for getting through it. Prepare for the fact that in any adventure, there are fun times and bad times. Believing in his ability to cope is powerful. Give your child an imaginary security blanket (invisible superhero cape, a magic rock that you leave at home) and have confidence in his ability to adapt.

REMINDER – FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS COVID-19

If your child or another family member experiences COVID-19 symptoms, is awaiting test results, or is infected with the virus, it is crucial to implement certain measures.

The most important thing is that the person with symptoms or who has had a positive test result for COVID-19 should stay home until they receive the public health call that will provide specific instructions for their situation.

GO TO THE SECTION ON OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION
chusj.org/FAQcovid19



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Your child's school or school service centre will provide you with information on returning to school in this pandemic context.

If your child's health is fragile, but was attending school before the pandemic, it is very likely that he can continue to go to the school. If in doubt, you can contact his doctor to discuss your concerns.

The following websites are also useful for additional information:

- CHU Sainte-Justine chusj.org
- Government of Quebec quebec.ca/coronavirus
- Government of Quebec quebec.ca/rentree
- If your child has a specific medical condition, go to chusj.org/guiderentree

Finally, public health authorities in the different regions are also reliable sources for information about COVID-19.