

Montreal, Monday, August 24, 2020

**François de Laval Primary School and Its Annex
Guidelines for a Welcoming and Safe Return to School**

Dear parents,

Our school staff is getting ready to finalize the return of all students that we have dearly missed in a welcoming and safe environment. We are well aware that this 2020-2021 school year will raise a great number of questions, due to its context and its organizational challenges. Taking into account the last directives of the Ministry of Education as well as the public health guidelines, we have outlined the following measures for our school reopening, adapted to our environment. We hope that this letter will adequately answer all your concerns.

Full-time Classes

All students will be back to school full-time from Monday to Friday.

This new school year will start Thursday, August 27 for all students, EXCEPT FOR those in primary welcoming classes, who will begin Friday, August 28 (Please refer to the information further down).

(All regular classes and Kindergarten classes (regular and welcoming groups) will begin on August 27, BUT WELCOMING CLASSES FOR GRADES 1 THROUGH 6 WILL START ON THE 28th).

It will be a regular day of class (see the schedule further below).

As it was mentioned in an email last Friday, the first day of classes (Thursday, August 27), the daycare services WILL BE CLOSED BEFORE AND AFTER CLASSES, but the lunch daycare service will be operational.

As for the Kindergarteners (regular and welcoming kindergarten), they will start gradual kindergarten classes, next Thursday, August 27. Parents should have already received an email containing this information at the address that they provided during the student's registration. If you are a parent of a kindergartener and you have not received this information, please contact the school's secretary. Also, rest assured that teachers will contact you between Monday and Wednesday.

How Will We Welcome Back Primary Students This Year?

Given the current restrictions on social gatherings in the context of COVID-19, and the following elements :

- The size of our school,
- The number of students,
- The school yard which is currently reduced by more than 50% of its usual capacity,
- The current distancing rules

Our back-to-school 2020 will not be held as usual. We are counting on your support and your collaboration in respecting the instructions laid out in this document.

Furthermore, we would need you to explain them to your child and remind them why we must proceed in this manner. *If we all respect the rules, we all contribute to staying healthy.* This will help them follow the new rules that we have established.

Teachers will get in touch with the students' families, between the 24th and the 26th of August, **so that your child will know where they must show up.**

During the phone call or in an email that will be sent, the following information will be provided.

- The teacher's name
- The group number
- The classroom number and its floor
- The building

We will ask you to take note of this information on a piece of paper and ensure that your child will have it handy when they arrive to school.

If your child is new to our school, some school personnel will be available to welcome them and guide them. All they need to do is to come to a table which will be marked with a ? and that will be located between the two buildings, on Bois de Boulogne Street.

Students in Grade 1 and 2.

August 27 and 28, students should be accompanied **by one adult only (Or an older sibling. For example, a 5th grader).**

Between 7:45 and 8:15 am, by respecting the distancing measures with other families, 1st and 2nd graders (and their companions) will meet their respective home room teacher.

All teachers will be spread out in the annex's school yard (accessible by in between both buildings and also Salaberry Street). Every teacher will hold a big sign showing their group number.

As soon as the student finds their teacher and once the teacher checks their name from the group's list, the child's companion must leave. Explain these procedures to your child beforehand. That will help them prepare for the events.

Students in Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5 and 6.

Between 7:50 and 8:15 am* (1st day only), **by respecting a distance of 2 m**, students will go directly to their new classroom. Teachers will be waiting for them (as of August 28, starting time will be between 7:50 and 8:00 am).

Please note that when students move around in common areas, face coverings are required for grade 5 and grade 6 students, and only suggested for the other grades.

School staff will be available at the various entry doors and within the school to guide the students, if need be.

For the main building : (group lists will be posted on the doors to the outside)

4A students, as well as 2B and 2E students (as of August 31) will enter the school by door located at the end of modular rooms, close to the wooded area.

4C students (as well as those from 2C, 2D, 2F and 2G, as of August 31) will enter the school by the door located at the southern part of the gymnasium.

4E, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 6C, and 6E students will enter by the south central door.

4B, 4D, 5F 6A, 6B, 6D, *AC2 and AC3 students* (as of August 31) will enter by the north central door.

For the annex building : (groups lists will be posted on the doors to the outside)

3A, 3B, 3C, 3D (as well as those from 101, 103, 104, as of August 31) will enter by the central door, next to the gymnasium.

3E, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E and 1F students will enter the school by the door located in between both buildings.

We will remind you that :

Only parents whose children are in kindergarten, grade 1 and 2 should accompany students to meet their teachers.

Parents whose children are in grade 3, 4, 5 and 6 won't be allowed to enter in the school yard.

General School Structure

Groups Organization

The staff is responsible for the school organization and the groups formation. At the end of each school year, teacher get together in order to form **balanced** groups, taking into consideration certain students criteria. All groups will contain strong, medium or more vulnerable students, calm students, fidgeted ones, boys and girls. Later groups go into a draw.

However, it is possible more students than expected show up or on the contrary, that some of those who we are expecting forgot to inform us of their moving. This could force us to open or close groups, to transfer students from one group to another on the 2nd day of classes, and even in very rare occasions move students to other schools in the area, if the enrollment ratio and/or the number of groups in our school vary (see the school admission policies of the CSSDM).

Life in society requires us to meet new people and we must adapt to their sometimes difficult personalities and this is a fact of life. *Please note that any group changing requests will be not accepted by the school administration.*

Up until now, we are expecting to have the following groups:

FDL (main building)	FDLA (its annex)
8 regular kindergarten groups	6 groups of grade 1
6 groups of grade 2	1 combined group grade 1 and 2 *
5 groups of grade 4	5 groups of grade 3
6 groups of grade 5	2 kindergarten welcoming groups
5 groups of grade 6	3 elementary welcoming groups
2 elementary welcoming groups	

* Combined groups are formed when the number of students goes over the group capacity but it's not enough to open a new group of the same level. Students who in these groups have been picked by teachers and are selected according to their temperament among other traits that they know about them.

Elementary schedule

7:50 to 8h00 : **Free entry** by respecting the distancing guidelines (as previously described for August 27)*

8:00 to 11:35: Teaching periods (recess will take place outside unless there is rain or extreme cold temperatures)

11:35 to 12:52: Lunch (students who eat at school will play unless there is rain or extreme cold temperatures)

12:52 to 13:00: Free entry for students who eat at home.

13:00 to 15:08: Teaching periods (recess will take place outside unless there is rain or extreme cold temperatures).

* Grade 1 and grade 2 students will also benefit from the free entry as of August 31st.

Preschool Regular schedule

8:55 to 11:28 : Teaching periods

11:28 to 12:50: Lunch (students who eat at school will play unless there is rain or extreme cold temperatures)

12:50 to 15:05: Teaching periods

Leaving at the End of the Day

Parents are forbidden to go into the school yard. **ONLY ONE parent of a 1st grader will allowed for August 27, August 28 and August 31.**

Students using school transportation will gather at the school yard, prior to their bus boarding guided by a teacher.

Students going home by foot or those whose parents come to get them must find their parent by the doors of the school yard (please make a routine with your child and agree on particular door where you will meet each other, always meet at the same place, when necessary).

Siblings who must meet before leaving the school, use the cement benches in the annexe's school yard as a meeting point.

All the students must leave the yard promptly. There is a yard supervision until 3:25pm. If there are still students left in the yard, they will be escorted to the secretary's office building.

Welcoming of Preschool New Students and Welcoming Classes Groups

Starting in kindergarten and in welcoming group is a stepping stone for all children. Due to the current pandemic of COVID-19, many of you didn't even have the chance to visit our school before your child embarks on this great adventure in a school setting. Be advised that all our students will be welcome with kindness. We will do our best to offer them a safe and stimulating environment. If you haven't done it already, please visit our website <https://francois-de-laval.csdm.ca/> which will paint a pretty good picture of our dynamic educational community.

Sanitary Measures to Ensure Both the Safety and Health of Students

Very strict hygiene and safety protocols have been established in our school buildings:

- Help us keep our school healthy: If your child presents any symptoms similar to those of COVID, **keep them at home, check the following link:** [For a safe return to school, we shall remain vigilant to avoid any spread](#) (available in French only). Let us know how your situation evolves (either use the school email or call the school's secretary),
- It is mandatory to wash your hands when entering the school, before and after every recess, before and after eating, after blowing your nose, and when leaving to go home.
- **It is recommended to use a personal reusable water bottle (full upon arrival).**

- Our school does not have enough washrooms **next to** the entry points of the school buildings. To wash your hands in a limited time, students will use alcohol-based gel. This procedure will be supervised by a staff member who will squirt a small quantity of gel into the child's hand.
- Furthermore, alcohol-based solutions, sinks, soap and disposable paper will be available for both students and the staff members in order to frequently wash their hands during the day.
- Tissues are also available for students and staff members to respect good respiratory hygiene practices.
- All classrooms and rooms will be frequently cleaned.
- Toilets and surfaces that are often touched, such as door knobs, light switches, desks, computer equipment, water fountains and faucets will be regularly sanitized.
- Students should limit bringing personal belongings between the school and home.
- Objects shared by several students will be disinfected as frequently as possible.
- Traffic patterns in common areas will be limited, adapted and guided. It is recommended to avoid contact. Floor markings will help us visualize the distance that should be respected during individual trips.
- Greetings requiring any physical contacts among people, like handshakes among others, are banned.
- **For the staff:** Face covering are mandatory at all times when circulating outside their classrooms.
 - Preschool teachers (kindergarten for 5-years-olds) must wear personal protective equipment in the classroom, where physical distancing with students is not required.
 - For all the other elementary levels, staff members are not obliged to wear a face covering, if the 2-m distance is respected with the students.
 - Supplementary personal protective equipment will be provided to some staff members when the 2-m distance cannot be respected with students.

Face Covering for Students

Face covering is mandatory for all students from grade 5 elementary, when being outside their stable group, when moving around the school's common areas, when students from other classrooms are present, and when using the school transportation. It can be removed when being with their stable group. Face covering is not obligatory for students from grade 1 through grade 4, inclusively, even when using school transportation. It's the parents' responsibility to provide their children with a face covering.

Consult this website [wearing a mask or a face covering](#) to get all the information related to wearing a face covering in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Safety of Handling Objects

Public health and sanitary measures issued by the government require us to be extremely vigilant with any germ spread through surface contact. Door knobs, stair railings and any other frequently touched surface by students and staff members will be regularly disinfected. However, objects handled in the classroom must be kept to a minimum. As a result, students won't be able to benefit from pedagogical material and games in the classroom: they must only handle their personal belongings, as much as possible.

School Transportation

This back-to-school 2020 in the context of Covid 19, the Direction générale de santé publique (DGSP) has laid out [new recommendations regarding school transportation](#) (only available in French). Considering that the bus capacity will be reduced, school transportation service will be limited, and mainly offered to students living in the school neighbourhood. Likewise, whenever possible, it is recommended for parents to drive or walk their children in order to reduce the number of students who are transported. Also, it is important to promptly notify the school, if parents will no longer use the school transportation.

Lunch at School (Available as of August 27)

Lunch hours will follow public health protocols.

When possible, students from their stable group will be kept within the same group during daycare service hours.

The catering service (*it will begin September 8. More information will follow shortly*) will be available and very strict sanitary measures will be followed.

It will be permitted for children to eat home, but protocols will should be respected in terms of their handwash before they leave and after they come back.

Moving Around in the School

As for the physical distancing measures, a 1-m distance within closed groups and a 2-m distance when interacting with adults must be respected, during any indoor or outdoor activity. Access to play structures will be permitted.

Daycare Service Structure : CLOSED AUGUST 27. ONLY LUNCH DAYCARE SERVICE WILL BE OFFERED.

School daycare services will resume normal activities (current fee structures, usual ratios) by respecting any guidelines issued by the public health authorities. Any sanitary measures issued for a school setting will be applicable by the school daycare services. When possible, students from their closed group will be kept within the same group during daycare service hours.

Caution, snack times: you must prepare a snack (ideally allergen free) for your child, when they attend school daycare services, after classes. Snacks will no longer be provided by the school daycare services.

In order to reduce risks related to the mixing of stable groups, an accompanying guide has been designed by the CSSDM. It provides, among other things, several organization alternatives. For example, how to plan activities that will enable the educator set the environment, allowing the participation of more than one closed group and respecting all the physical distancing measures.

Students will attend the school daycare services in the building where their classroom is located. No students will move around from one building to the next during the morning, neither at the end of the day. Parents shall escort their children to the building where their classroom is.

When students arrive in the school daycare services (SDS) in the morning, a SDS employee will welcome them and immediately after that, they should say goodbye to their parent and come in by themselves. We kindly ask parents to not go over the hallway and always respect the distancing measures.

When students leave the SDS, an employee will welcome parents at the door. Parents will give their child's name and they should then wait for their child to come either in the hallway, if there is enough room or **outside the school**, distancing themselves from other parents, if need be.

Distance Education for Students Whose Medical Conditions Can Make Them Vulnerable to COVID-19

The Ministry of Education has requested the CSSDM (centres de services scolaires du Québec) to set up a distance education service for all students who cannot attend school in person due to a specific medical condition that makes them vulnerable to COVID-19. Distance education will also be available for students residing at the same address as a relative with such medical condition. **If you wish for your child to have a medical exemption from returning school and having a compulsory attendance, let us know as soon as possible. A DOCTOR'S NOTE IS REQUIRED JUSTIFYING YOUR CHILD'S EXEMPTION AND EXPLAINING THAT THEIR HEALTH IS AT SERIOUS RISK IF THEY CONTRACT COVID-19.**

Clear Guidelines in Case of an Outbreak

The regional public health authorities provided [clear guidelines to follow](#) in educational institutions, so that they could inform parents on all the procedures to follow, if a student shows symptoms of COVID-19, if a student tests positive for COVID-19, or if several cases are detected within the same class or within multiple classes.

In all cases, parents will be contacted in case of an outbreak and they also will be notified of the measures taken by the CSSDM in a timely manner. Please note that the school administration is your first point of contact for any questions related to COVID-19.

An adapted version of the [Self-Care Guide – COVID-19](#) will soon be available on the government website Quebec.ca/coronavirus, so that parents can make the best possible decisions to protect themselves and their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guide will mainly outline the symptoms of COVID-19, what basic actions to take in order to treat children, and to know when to call the 1 877 644-4545 coronavirus hotline to seek help.

A New Service for Payments

We are announcing as well the deployment of internet payment services across all institutions of the CSSDM.

All the new account statements will be sent shortly. They will contain a reference number that will enable you to pay online via a transactional site from all the participating financial institutions. Detailed instructions as well as a list of the participating financial institutions will be indicated on the new account statements.

CONSTRUCTION SITES : School Renovations and other Projects in the Vicinity.

Even though the construction teams have been working hard on embellishing the school yard of the main building, they won't however be able to finish before our first day of school. The door located, north of the main pavilion, next to the parking lot will be inaccessible for a few weeks. **The entry to the school yard will be done by Salaberry Street between the two buildings, on the west side of the annex building.**

Furthermore, for the past few years, we have been working with the ville de Montréal and the Ahuntsic-Cartierville borough to increase safety around the school. Our efforts have finally been productive. Some construction work involving adding sidewalk extension is currently taking place in the vicinity of our school.

In both cases, traffic control persons will be there to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Therefore, if you wish to drive your children to school, you will possibly run into traffic jams. We encourage you to either walk to school or park a bit further from the school, making sure that you are not blocking anybody's driveway, and then walk for few blocks.

Safety measures taken by the CSSDM within a construction site in conjunction or with a visit of an external firm.

The Service des ressources matérielles (SRM) of the CSSDM has come up with a COVID-19 committee in cooperation with the construction projects in our school institutions. This committee informs all project managers, entrepreneurs as well as the external firms about preventative measures that must be respected by construction workers in their respective teams.

These measures are updated regularly and follow closely protocols issued by the public health authorities and by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). They include in particular social distancing measures of 2 metres in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection, such as frequent hand washing, good respiratory hygiene practices and full sanitation at the end of the construction project. Besides, in order to respect these measures, a thorough supervision of the projects is maintained by the professionals mandated by the project. Please note that the measures recently issued by the Ministry of Education were taken into account within the issue of those protocols, particularly in relation to the wearing a face covering within congested areas by users.

More information

School is important for our children and the benefits of going back to it are real. Students will be able to grow and thrive. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and would like to remind you that our staff members will do their best, as usual, to contribute to your child's learning and well-being.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

In close collaboration,

Lucie Charette,
FDL School principal.