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Parents and teachers react to Quebec's return to school

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MONTREAL (CityNews) — On Quebec's second back-to-school day during the pandemic, students in elementary and high schools in nine regions, including Montreal and Laval, will be wearing masks at all times while indoors.

On Tuesday at St. Monica elementary school in Montreal's Notre-Dame-de-Grace neighbourhood, many say they're hoping for a more normal year.

"I feel nervous to go back but overall excited to see my friends and to enjoy my last year of elementary school," said **Isabella Spagnuolo**, grade six student. "Just being around everyone again, it's just unfamiliar to me so I'm a little anxious for school but I'm excited as well."

Added **Joseph Spagnuolo**, Isabella's father: "It's just a matter of the uncertainty of the school environment and all of the uneasiness after doing one year of homeschooling."

RELATED: Anxiety, optimism as many Montreal kids return to class amid COVID's fourth wave (<https://montreal.citynews.ca/2021/08/31/anxiety-montreal-kids-class-covid/>)

"We've now been through the pandemic a few times so we're sort of used to what to do and how to be ready for that," said **Noah Trister**, an English and math teacher at St. Monica. "Generally we just want it to be a regular back-to-school day for all the kids, be excited, be happy, everyone's going to be smiling. The kids hopefully will all be happy to be back and we're just ready to go."

"I have a family, I want everyone to be safe, I want my students to be safe and I want their families to be safe. I always err on the side of caution, some people may think it's a bit too much but for me I think it's perfect."

This school year, **Quebec is deploying rapid COVID-19 screening tests** (<https://montreal.citynews.ca/2021/08/31/september-crucial-covid19-quebec/>). Reports of four "hot" neighbourhoods in the Montreal region will be able to quickly test and prevent outbreaks that lead to class closures.

"In June we were really expecting or hoping at least that it was going to be a normal return to school. That's not the case and I understand everyone's

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disappointed,” said **Joe Ortona**, English Montreal School Board chair.

“We’re not going to be enforcing bubbles but we are as much as possible, we are going to keep classrooms together and inside try to avoid different classes from mingling together. Outside it’s a different ballgame.”

“It happened last year a few times, we got an email saying there was a case in the class and everyone adapts to it and obviously it’ll be interesting to see. We’re really happy with how things went last year and we can only hope for the best this year too,” said **Mike Giles**, the parent of two children in elementary school.

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