

BY EMAIL

January 14, 2022

**Re: Reopening of schools: great news for children and teens**

Dear parents,

With schools scheduled to reopen, I want to contact you directly to ensure this return to school takes place with as little apprehension as possible. From a comprehensive public health perspective, being able to go back to school is great news for Montréal children and teens. A place of learning and socialization, it is of utmost importance for children's development, success and mental balance. Therefore, we will do everything we can to support schools and limit the spread of the virus so kids can keep attending classes. We must remain vigilant.

Many parents are questioning reopening schools while the transmission rate of Omicron is high. Although it is true that currently we are seeing particularly high transmission rates, we must take into account that this variant is less virulent and that vaccination offers excellent protection against more severe forms of the illness. Data on COVID-19 in schools confirm that transmission is lower in schools than in the community. In Montréal, most cases reported in schools were acquired outside the school; this was also true for cases of Omicron in December. Protective measures greatly reduce risks of transmission in schools. These are controlled settings where children wear masks and rapid tests will be accessible.

The government has prepared new tools (attached to this email) and a web page "[When to self-isolate \(COVID-19\)](#)" so you can follow the instructions if your child develops symptoms or becomes a case. Lastly, I want to remind you that the best protective measure is having the greatest number of people vaccinated. The best way to support our schools, protect our family members, neighbours and communities is to get vaccination rates as high as possible.

I hope I have helped reassure you. I also want to take a moment to wish you a happy and healthy 2022.



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