



Recommended COVID-19 preventive measures for childcare centers and schools in Nunavik communities **Measures for educators/teachers and other workers**

January 19, 2022

The recommendations in this document apply to childcare centers and schools where the epidemiological situation calls for adapted preventive measures under the current directives of the Nunavik department of Public Health.

The measures recommended in this document take into account the transmission of Covid-19 by inhalation of aerosols. **All these measures are complementary and should be applied together** whenever possible, considering the job tasks. They seek to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus and its variants and by extension, limit the risk of outbreaks. Their implementation ensures that activities can resume or continue under a safe work environment.

Note that all Nunavimmiut in communities where there is community transmission of COVID-19 should be considered as potentially having COVID-19 and capable of transmitting the infection to others, regardless of whether or not they present with symptoms and whether or not they are vaccinated.

Preventive measures referred to in this document were taken from various references, some being listed in: <http://nrhss.ca/en/workplaces>.




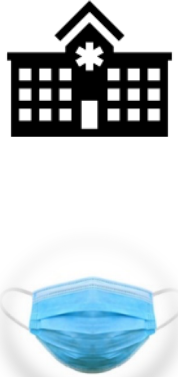
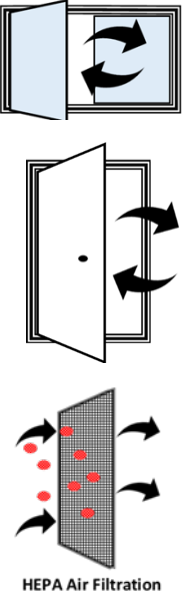
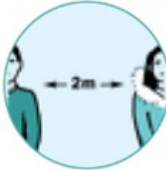



This document will be updated as necessary, according to advances in scientific knowledge of the disease transmission and severity. To obtain the latest version and for more detailed information on different topics related to preventive measures in the workplace, please refer to <http://nrhss.ca/en/workplaces>

Questions: If you have questions concerning COVID and the workplace, send them to the following e-mail address: workplace-covid.nrbhss@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Signage/posters: Signs and posters reiterating the importance of practicing the necessary preventive measures (identification of symptoms and case management, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, wearing of a mask and physical distancing) should be set up in strategic areas. Signs and posters can be found in <http://nrhss.ca/en/workplaces>

Worker’s claim: Any worker testing positive for COVID-19 and who believes he or she was contaminate during work activities should fill out the worker’s claim form. According to a recent decision by the Tribunal Administratif du Travail (TAT), it could also be the employer’s responsibility to accompany the worker in this process. For more information and for worker’s claim: <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/forms-and-publications/workers-claim>

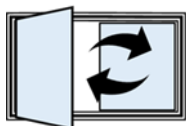
Use as much layers of preventative measures as possible, considering the job tasks
 In order to prevent COVID-19 transmission and reduce the risk of outbreaks

1. Working remotely and reducing contacts when possible	2. Exclusion of Symptomatic workers	3. Vaccination	4. Wearing a certified mask in the presence of others, at all times inside buildings (and outdoors when < 2 m)	5. Ventilation and Filtration HEPA	6. Physical Distancing at least 2 meters, when possible	7. Respiratory Etiquette and Hand Hygiene	8. Cleaning and Disinfection	9. Wearing a respirator and eye protection when interacting with others not wearing a medical mask
				 <p>HEPA Air Filtration</p>				



4. Appropriately wearing a certified mask

- **When indoors**, workers should wear a **certified mask¹ at all times**, regardless of the distance between individuals. The certified mask must be properly worn, i.e., fully cover the nose, mouth and chin. It is important to wear a certified mask even during breaks in the presence of colleagues.
- **When outdoors**, workers should wear a **certified mask whenever they need to closely interact** (at a distance of less than 2 metres), regardless of the duration of the interaction.
- Wearing a certified mask is not necessary in the following situations:
 - When an employee is alone in a closed room.
 - At mealtime, provided that everyone respects the physical distancing of 2 metres and that ventilation is sufficient. Masks, however, can only be removed immediately before eating and must be donned immediately thereafter.
 - An employee's certified mask must be changed during breaks or at lunch time. They should also be changed more frequently if they become wet, soiled or damaged.
 - Washing one's hands before and after putting on (donning) or removing (doffing) a certified mask is strongly recommended. Once a mask has been removed, it should be thrown into a no-contact trashcan.
 - A certified mask can be worn outdoors in the winter, either alone or underneath a neck warmer (e.g., fleece or other warm fabric).
- **Indoors or outdoors**, even if they are designed for wearer protection instead of protection of others, respirators including N95 mask, offer also the prevention of the environmental contamination. For more details on respirators see section # 9 below.

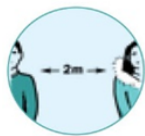


5. Ventilation and filtration HEPA

- Ideally, ventilation should be ensured by a mechanical ventilation system with fresh air intake.

¹ About certified mask <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html>

- If ventilation does not imply fresh air intake (only recirculation) or if fresh air intake is not sufficient, it is recommended to resort to natural ventilation, by opening windows for 5 minutes every hour or 10-15 minutes 4 times a day (mid-morning, lunch time, mid-afternoon and after class), and more often if possible (for example, by combining 5 minutes per hour and 10-15 minutes 4 times a day). In addition, leave classroom doors and transom windows (window above a door) open if possible². Ensure restroom exhaust fans (and kitchen range hood, if any) are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied. Make sure that carbon dioxide detectors are functional.
- Portable HEPA³ filter units are another effective way to control aerosol concentration. In poorly ventilated learning environments (no mechanical ventilation and no window), a portable HEPA filter unit would be necessary. If these conditions can't be met, another room with ventilation should be used. It is to note that portable units are commercially available, relatively inexpensive and easy to use.
- **Especially for schools:** Continuously monitoring indoor air quality is important in order to ensure that the best possible learning and working environment is provided at all times for students and school staff. Carbone dioxide (CO₂) levels are one possible air quality indicator⁴. A high level of CO₂ (more than 800 ppm) may suggest that other harmful contaminants are present, meaning that ventilation in rooms may have to be improved. The exchange of indoor and outdoor air, through both natural and mechanical ventilation, is the primary method used to modify CO₂ and other contaminants concentrations in occupied rooms.



6. Physical distancing

- Whenever possible, physical distancing of at least 2 metres must be complied with at all times, even when wearing a certified mask.
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that physical distancing measures are adhered to during breaks and meals and when going outside for smoking, especially when no medical mask or N95 respirator is worn.
- All direct contacts (handshakes, hugs) are to be avoided.

² For detailed recommendations, refer to ministère de l'Éducation, p. 19: <https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/education/publications-adm/covid-19/consignes-scolaire.pdf?1630697570>

³ Acronym for high-efficiency particulate air. These filters can eliminate up to 99.97% of aerosol particles.

⁴ The *Ministère de l'Éducation* developed a strategy regarding air quality in schools, which includes the installation of carbon dioxide (CO₂) sensors and other indicators to ensure optimal air quality in all classrooms in Québec by December 2021 or as quickly as possible, based on schools plan and the dates on which the sensors are received: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/preschool-elementary-and-secondary-schools/air-quality-schools>.



7. Respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene

- Everyone should:
 - Cough and sneeze in the crook of their elbow.
 - Blow their nose in a tissue that they will immediately throw in a no-contact trashcan. They should then wash their hands (immediately or as soon as possible).
 - Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with their hands.
- Employees must regularly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use water and soap, a hydroalcoholic solution (minimum of 60% alcohol) or towelettes and no-contact trashcans.
 - They should, at a minimum, do so when they arrive at work and before they leave, before and after a break or a meal, after they have a smoke or vape, after taking off their mask, and after using the washroom.
- Educators and teachers should encourage and model handwashing and respiratory etiquette throughout the day.



8. Cleaning and disinfection⁵

- Clean the objects and surfaces frequently touched by children, parents or employees in the classrooms, the pick-up and drop-off areas and other areas (ex.: tables, chairs, door handles, desks, telephones, microwave, etc.). This should be done as often as possible, at least once a day when all children have been picked up.
- Use cleaning products as recommended by the manufacturer and scrub thoroughly.
- As much as possible, opt for scheduled use of toys (only one group using toys for a given day) and school equipment to limit the frequency of disinfection to once a day. If, however, toys or school equipment are used by more than one group on the same day, disinfect them between groups.

⁵What cleaning products to use? <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>



9. Wearing a respirator and eye protection

- Indoors or outdoors, respirators (including disposable N95 mask⁶) offer a safer protection against aerosols inhalation than medical masks. If they are available⁷, respirators are the device of choice particularly for workers interacting indoors with a child or another person not wearing a medical mask, even beyond 2 meters of distance, regardless of the duration of the interaction. Ideally employees must undergo a fit test⁸ to ensure the respirator is properly adjusted to their face. They will then learn how to wear it appropriately and how to do the seal check each time the respirator is put on. This device must be in direct contact with clean skin and may not be “hindered” by facial or other hair. For further information regarding respirators, please refer to <https://nrbhss.ca/en/workplaces>
- When in close contact (at a distance of less than 2 metres) with a child or another person not wearing a medical mask, employees must also wear eye protection that fully covers the sides of the eyes (i.e., safety glasses or a face shield) in addition to a respirator N95 or superior.
- Prescription eyeglasses do not provide adequate eye protection unless they have sideguards.

10. Other recommendations

- Educators/teachers and other workers should encourage children to ask questions and voice their concerns, should address mental health/psychosocial support needs and should provide information in an honest and age-appropriate manner.
- Educators/teachers should favour outdoor activities as much possible as this reduces risks of transmission through inhalation of contaminated aerosols.

⁶ Although there are many models of respirators, the model probably most easily available for childcare/school workers is the disposable filtering facepiece respirator (FFP) N95 mask. A FFP N95 **without** an exhalation valve is necessary to provide bi-directional protection.

⁷ Please note that Public health direction of Nunavik recommends to go beyond the CNESST's recommendation for HCW when cares or services are given to the population in the same context of proximity without bilateral certified mask : “At this time, health care workers are required to wear a disposable N95 mask or respiratory protective equipment (RPE) that provides superior protection if they work in a health care setting with users at moderate or high risk of COVID-19 or with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 (in warm and hot zones). [Questions and answers – COVID-19 | Commission des normes de l'équité de la santé et de la sécurité du travail - CNESST \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#) Question #38, updated-january 11, 2022 (site consulted of january 12,2022)

⁸ According to the CNESST : «If the employer can show that logistical difficulties are preventing them from offering fit tests to workers, the use of respirators by these workers without prior fit tests is a temporary measure while waiting on the fit tests. In this case, the employer must plan fit tests for their staff [...]» <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/en/prevention-and-safety/covid-19/questions-and-answers-covid-19>