



# Virtual Learning 2020-2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting is strongly committed to its students, their parents and families, and to all members of our community. Our mission is to help students achieve academic success and to prepare them to become responsible, productive and contributing members of society. The EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting is dedicated to providing quality education and nurturing life-long learners.

We invite you, as a family, to take the time to read the EMSB *Virtual Learning* 2020-2021 Handbook below. It has been designed to provide you with valuable information about our school policies and procedures.

Again, we thank you for the trust you instill in us as we care for your child's education and well-being.

Christy Tannous  
Principal

Réal Heppelle  
Vice-Principal

## Composition of the EMSB *Virtual Learning*

The EMSB's newly established *Virtual Learning* setting is offered to students from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 11, who have qualified for exemptions and will not be returning to their regular schools this school year. In a context outside of the COVID-19 global pandemic, these students would have attended one of the EMSB's other schools.

Our dedicated, experienced, and certified staff includes an administration, preschool, elementary and secondary level teachers as well as support staff including childcare workers, special education technicians and professionals (psychologists, speech & language pathologists, occupational therapists). The EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting will also rely on the experience and expertise of specialists, professionals in education, and educational consultants. The students will be paired with teachers who will accompany them during the 2020-2021 academic year. Finally, Student Services and Educational Services will assist the school team to facilitate the educational progress of the students of the EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting.



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## Virtual Learning Beliefs & Goals

The EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting is designed to provide all students with the same quality of education, the same level of organization and the same access to resources as all other EMSB schools. The EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting strives to foster well-rounded students who grow within an atmosphere that provides a challenging academic curriculum and a thriving school culture. We believe in continuously placing a spotlight on respect, cooperation, and interdependence amongst all members of the school community. It is our belief that parents, teachers and students share the responsibility for each child's educational success. Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning in an environment that prioritizes safety, happiness and positive self-esteem.

## Holidays and Professional Days

The official annual school year calendar can be found on the following page. Please note the holidays, school board professional days and the EMSB *Virtual Learning* setting's professional days.

## Important Dates

### Formal Reporting to Parents

This year exceptionally, the school year will be divided into two terms. The end of each term is followed by the distribution of a Student Report Card. Parent/Teacher Interviews will be held following the Progress Reports and Term 1.

	<u>Report Card issued to Parents</u>	<u>Parent-Teacher Conferences</u>
Progress Report Card	November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Nov 26 <sup>th</sup> virtual day & night (by appointment only)
Term I	January 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Virtual Parent-Teacher Interviews (by invitation only) TBD
Term II	July 10 <sup>th</sup>	N/A



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JUILLET / JULY 2020							AOÛT / AUGUST 2020							SEPTEMBRE / SEPTEMBER 2020						
D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/F	S/S	D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/FS/S	D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/F	S/S	
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OCTOBRE / OCTOBER 2020							NOVEMBRE / NOVEMBER 2020							DÉCEMBRE / DECEMBER 2020						
D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/F	S/S	D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/FS/S	D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/F	S/S	
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JANVIER / JANUARY 2021							FÉVRIER / FEBRUARY 2021							MARS / MARCH 2021						
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AVRIL / APRIL 2021							MAI / MAY 2021							JUIN / JUNE 2021						
D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/F	S/S	D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/FS/S	D/S	L/M	M/T	M/W	J/T	V/F	S/S	
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	<b>Holiday / Congés</b>		<b>Fixed Professional Days by EMSB / Journées pédagogiques fixes par CSEM</b>		<b>March Break / Relâche scolaire</b>
	<b>Non-working days / Journées non-travaillées</b>		<b>Local Professional Days by School / Journées pédagogiques fixes – École</b>		<b>English Montreal School Board Commission Scolaire English-Montréal</b>



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## Distance Education Guidelines

The *Virtual Learning* is adapted to online learning and will therefore provide flexibility in that the students' 5-hour day will not be spent exclusively in front of a screen, as prescribed by the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur* (MEES) for all Quebec virtual settings. As a result, each child's schedule will encompass three components, as seen below:

	Number of hours per week dedicated to online learning	Number of hours of independent work provided by the teacher per week	Number of hours of teacher availability per day or per week to meet the needs of the students
Pre-School (K4-K5)	11.5 hours of large group or small group instruction and activities	2 hours	N.A
Grade 1 and 2	10.5 hours of teaching	3 hours	2.5 hours per day
Grade 3 and 4	13 hours of teaching	5 hours	2 hours per day
Grade 5 and 6	13 hours of teaching	7.5 hours	2 hours per day
Grade 7, 8 and 9	15 hours of teaching	7.5 hours	5 hours per week
Grade 10 and 11	15 hours of teaching	7.5 hours	5 hours per week

## School Hours & Routine

### Virtual Learning Office Hours

School Office: 7:30AM to 3:30PM

E-mail: [ctannous@emsb.qc.ca](mailto:ctannous@emsb.qc.ca)  
[rheppelle@emsb.qc.ca](mailto:rheppelle@emsb.qc.ca)

*\*Please allow for a 24-hour response delay when communicating via e-mail. Rest assured that communication by phone and/or virtual meetings are always possible and will be scheduled as needed.*

Although in an e-learning context, arriving at school/logging in on time is fundamental. Tardiness is not accepted. Please understand that classes begin immediately as per the schedule above. Tardiness therefore equates a loss of valuable learning time and classroom organization that may hinder your child's success.

Please understand that repetitive tardiness will be addressed with parents and will be recorded on student's official school file.



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## Newsletter & Monthly Calendar

Over the course of the year, a Newsletter will regularly be sent by e-mail to all parents, whereas the Monthly Calendar can be found on our website <https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/virtualllearning> . Please take careful note of all information and dates since you will not receive any alternate written notices. Please make sure we have your current e-mail address and contact information to ensure efficiency of communication at all times. Please inform us of any changes in address, phone numbers or e-mail.

## Student Absences

**Please notify the teacher of your child's absence via e-mail before 8:30AM,** stating the reason. If we have not received a call about your child's absence, we will contact you to ensure your child's safety.

Each absence from school hinders a child's progress. Regular attendance fosters good work habits. As well, one day's absence is, in fact, more than one day's work. Upon his/her return, the student must catch-up on the previous day's work as well as that of the day when he/she returns. As much as possible, parents are asked to schedule medical and other appointments after school hours or on pedagogical days, thereby minimizing loss of school time.

## Netiquette Tips: Students & Parents

Due to the unique e-learning nature of *Virtual Learning*, it is essential to consider netiquette - the correct or acceptable way of communicating and behaving in a virtual classroom. For your convenience, we have separated this section by student & parent involvement. For younger students, parent involvement and support are crucial when considering the points below.

The EMSB's Educational Services Department has also prepared a 'Tips for Parents' section on the EMSB's website, including Tips for Digital Citizenship, as well as Tips for Supporting Your Child's Academic Learning at Home. Consult them here:

<https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/community/education/activities/tips-for-parents>

### Students:

- **Make a Space for Learning**
  - Choose a specific area of the home as your workspace - one that is quiet, comfortable, and strictly devoted to learning.
  - This space should be designated to learning - verify where you will be seated to ensure that you are comfortable with what is visible to your teacher & peers. Students may also be given the option to blur their background if they feel more comfortable this way.
  - Lighting should be placed in a way to show the student's face.



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- Be sure that you have easy access to the materials and supplies that you will need to work well (headphones, mouse, paper, pens, office supplies, timer).
- **Familiarize Yourself with the Designated Learning Platform**
  - Once your teacher has shared information in regard to the virtual learning platform being used, explore the resources provided. Practice makes perfect!
  - Test the platform and consider reviewing main tasks/accessing tools. Always ask for help if you run into difficulties.
  - Keep track of login information, access codes & passwords
    - Note: Rest assured that additional support and guidance can be provided by the classroom teacher and the IT consultants at the School Board.
- **Be on Time, Prepared & on Task**
  - As with in-school classes, you should have all the necessary materials nearby so as to avoid unnecessary delays and classroom interruptions.
  - Be sure to respect your teacher's expectations in regard to things such as homework and assignments. These expectations will be clearly explained at the start of the year. Consider using a planner or checklist.
  - Please ensure that all necessary equipment (microphone, camera) is ready and functional before class starts so as to not delay the lesson.
- **Limit Distractions**
  - Until schoolwork is done, limit your use of devices to what is needed to complete your work only.
  - Background noise should be kept to a minimum if not eliminated completely.
- **Participate as Much as Possible**
  - Listen actively, ask questions and get involved so as to optimize your learning experience.
  - Consider making use of your teacher's office hours/tutorials, when needed.
  - Always raise your hand and wait your turn to speak.
- **Create a Schedule**
  - Think through a schedule not only for each day, but each week.
  - Be sure to consider what you are responsible for accomplishing, how much time the completion of each task will take. Waiting for the last minute may lead to problems with things such as deadlines.
  - Work around other commitments (ex: extra-curricular activities)
  - Remember - there is a designated time for eating snacks & lunch. Students should not be eating during instructional time.
- **Maintain Breaks**
  - Take full advantage of breaks as you would usually do at school.



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- Whenever possible throughout extended breaks (i.e. lunch time), get some fresh air, go for a walk, and break away from your sedentary stance. Exercise in between classes may help improve your concentration!
- **Connect with Peers**
  - Outside of virtual classroom time, be sure to keep in touch with peers who may or may not be following a distance education program - keeping strong social bonds is rewarding. Fun with friends is always important. Don't forget to stay in touch!

### Parents:

We encourage parents to supervise their child's work and progress on a continual basis. As always, a collaborative effort between home and school can only strengthen our role as leaders & mentors. We thank you for your special attention to the information below:

- **Efficiently & Appropriately Communicate with Teachers**
  - Building a collaborative relationship with your child's teacher is essential - be sure to read through the teacher's course outline for details regarding their preferred communication methods. We all want success for our students, and this is best achieved through collaboration.
  - Kindly consider the fact that your child will thrive as an independent learner. Under no circumstances should parents interject or interrupt during virtual classroom time to discuss matters/concerns with the teacher.
  - If parents wish to meet with their child's teacher other than on the Parent-Teacher conference dates, a request should be submitted via e-mail to the child's teacher. The teacher will then set a time convenient for all.
  - In the event that further discussion is needed following a discussion with a teacher, the Administration of the *Virtual Learning setting* remains available.
- **Familiarize Yourself with the G-Suite/ Google Classroom Platform**
  - Just as your child will do, take the time to get familiar with what the designated platform looks like, how your child will be using it and what resources are available
  - Consider that many platforms have a parent portal, for easy and effective overview
  - As a friendly reminder, we encourage you to consult the *Tips for Parents* section established by the Educational Services Department: <https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/community/education/activities/tips-for-parents>
- **Be a Motivator & Monitor**
  - Make sure to allow your child to complete their own work. In this new distance education reality, parents are encouraged to make suggestions and guide their



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children. All work submitted must be produced by the child, according to the teacher's expectations.

- The virtual learning experience should mirror the classroom setting - whereby your child is an independent learner who thinks for themselves and makes their own mistakes.

<https://sites.google.com/emsb.qc.ca/online-learning-for-parents/home>

### Policies & Procedures: Code of Conduct

The *Virtual Learning's* policies & procedures are based on the concept that personal freedom is accompanied by the responsibility to respect the freedom of others. Common courtesy, good manners and mutual respect are expected. Discipline is most meaningful when it is self-imposed or self-controlled. The *Virtual Learning* setting requires all students & parents to abide by the rules of good digital citizenship.

While parental input is welcomed and considered, it is the responsibility of the school staff and administration to make decisions about discipline.

It is therefore necessary that the school have the parents' support, cooperation and assistance when required. As with any learning environment, RESPECT is of the utmost importance. Therefore, the following expectations consistently apply:

- Show respect for all adults and peers at all times. Respect includes courtesy, good manners, politeness, cooperation, proper tone of voice and body language.
- Emotional abuse such as mocking, humiliating, and ridiculing of any individual will not be tolerated.
- The use of inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- Students are expected to listen to and follow the instructions of teachers. Kindly note that every teacher will communicate the nuances of their e-classroom functioning, as well as their virtual classroom expectations through the course outline. Children who consistently create a situation that jeopardizes a pleasant learning environment should expect repercussions.

### General Attendance, Absences, Lates

- Excused Absences
  - Excused absences are those resulting from illness, injury, or a family emergency. A parent must notify the teacher of their child's absence via e-mail before 8:30AM, stating the reason. If we have not received information regarding a child's absence, a parent/guardian will be contacted to ensure the child's safety.





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- **Truancy:**
  - Parents will be contacted and asked to meet with the administration regarding cases of chronic or suspicious absences. According to the Education Act, a child must attend school on a daily basis. Avoiding tests or assignment deadlines is not a valid excuse for missing a class.
  
- **Family Trips:**
  - As the school calendar provides a generous vacation schedule, we strongly discourage family trips which result in students missing school. Such absences can be detrimental to the student whose work is interrupted. Our curriculum is quite demanding; therefore, class attendance is crucial. We strongly recommend that parents DO NOT plan trips during formal assessment/examination periods.
  
- **Late Arrival:**
  - Students must be ready to log on at the start of each period. They must arrive on time with all the required materials.
  - When a student is late for class (logs on after the prescribed time), their teacher will mark them as late in their attendance platform. Students who are late for class (i.e. not logged on, at their desk, with all necessary materials) will be addressed.
  
- **Early Dismissal:**
  - Where an early dismissal is unavoidable, the parent must advise the teacher via e-mail 24 hours prior, or first thing in the morning. An early dismissal for medical or personal reasons is granted when an e-mail request is issued by a parent or guardian. At dismissal time, the student will be excused by the teacher.

### Appropriate Attire

Despite a virtual setting and no prescribed dress/colour code, appropriate clothing is consistently expected during school hours as well as throughout any school-related activity or event. The following items are not considered proper attire and are not permitted:

- **Items that Distract or Pose a Safety Issue:**
  - Language or graphics on clothing that display provocative, obscene, violent, sexist or racist slogans, or refer to drugs, alcohol or smoking. The promotion of such cultures is forbidden at all times.
  
- **Revealing Clothing:**
  - Students should not wear items with holes, rips or tears.
  - Midriffs, undergarments should remain covered at all times.



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## Personal Possessions

Items from home that are irrelevant to *Virtual Learning* and distract from its functioning should not be made visible during class time.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a moral expectation, whereby the student demonstrates that all work submitted is their own work. When students submit an assignment that is not their own original work, they are earning credit for learning material for which they have not demonstrated mastery.

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion are considered breaches of academic integrity.

- **Plagiarism** involves copying the work of another without acknowledging the original author. A student guilty of plagiarizing work will be issued a consequence, and the parents will be informed.
- **Cheating** may encompass the following:
  - Purposely projecting deceit, fraud or trickery
  - Providing questions, answers or work to another student
  - Receiving questions, answers or work from another student or adult
- **Collusion**
  - Knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit academic violations (i.e. completing an assignment for someone else)
  - Collaborating with others while taking online evaluations without the authorization of the teacher.

## Safe School Environment

- **Violence, Aggression and Dangerous Behaviors:**

On June 12, 2012, the Quebec National Assembly passed *Bill 56: An Act to stop bullying and violence in schools*, calling upon all Quebecers, not just students, parents, and school staff, to engage in a concerted effort to put an end to bullying and violence in schools. In accordance with this Bill and the *Virtual Learning's* philosophy:

  - Violence or aggression will not be tolerated.
  - Bullying (to treat others abusively, repeatedly) will not be tolerated. Bullying includes physical or emotional abuse. Regardless of where the bullying takes place, it will be addressed by the school if the victim of the abuse feels unsafe and threatened. Consequences will ensue.
  - Ridiculing of any individual will not be tolerated
    - Mockery of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, physical or mental disability, sex, or sexual orientation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.



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- Inappropriate aggressive outbursts toward adults or peers as well as excessive foul language will not be tolerated.
- Dangerous behaviour of any kind will not be permitted.
- Social Media Use:
  - In order to further reinforce *Bill 56*, parents will immediately be advised of any scenarios (and the accompanying disciplinary measures) regarding:
    - Verbal aggression through social media
    - Inappropriate online content
    - Defamation of the school (or in relation to the school) through online posts

### Electronic Devices

#### Respect for School Property

Respect for school property is crucial. The usage and maintenance of all electronic devices loaned from the school board must be in compliance with the Loan of Equipment Agreement Form for the current year. Equipment must be used appropriately and for pedagogical purposes only, as per the EMSB's relevant policies.

Article 18.2 of the Education Act states, "Students shall take good care of the property placed at their disposal and return it when school activities have ended. If a student fails to take care of or return the property, the school board may claim the value of the property from the student's parents if the student is a minor, or from the student if the student is of full age."

#### Use of Electronic Devices

Due to its unique setup, please note that the *Virtual Learning* setting inherently provides our students with consistent opportunities to explore technology. However, abuse of these devices (i.e. inappropriate content searches) will not be tolerated.

Therefore, the use of personal electronic devices that are not required for the purpose of virtual learning is not permitted throughout school hours and/or in any extension of the school day unless directed by a teacher for educational or instructional purposes. Students may use these devices on their own personal time.

#### Students should never...

- share login credentials with anyone else.
- establish login credentials that are deceiving or inappropriate (i.e. using an alternate name on a virtual platform).
- use anyone else's login account.
- knowingly upload any file that contains a virus, malware or other malicious code.



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- share course content with outside sources (evaluations, e-mail correspondences, digital captures, discussions, chat threads) without explicit written permission from the school.
- write, use, send, download or display any information that is hostile, insulting to others, obscene, threatening, or otherwise offensive.
- discuss in an open forum personal information that is critical of themselves, another student or teacher (opt for private correspondence with the teacher instead).
- use cell phones or other electronic devices to record or film students, teachers, or staff without their consent be it written or verbal.

### Disciplinary Measures

In the event of code of conduct violations in regard to any of the aforementioned sections, the staff and administration of the *Virtual Learning* setting reserve the right to decide the necessary consequences regarding student discipline as they deem fit.

It is the policy of the *Virtual Learning* setting that student discipline should be progressive; i.e. a student's first offense should not merit as severe a consequence as a repeat offense. Furthermore, please note that the administration deals with students as individuals, and therefore reserves the right to interpret the rules within the context of both the child and the particular act, in order for the child to benefit from our discipline. Rest assured that all relevant factors will be taken into consideration in determining an appropriate consequence.

Parents will be aware of disciplinary issues. The consequences below may be imposed alone or in combination, depending on the circumstances:

- Verbal or written warning
- Exclusion from a particular activity
- Reflection sheets/tasks
- Implementation of a behaviour contract
- Referral to professionals (CCWs, counselors, behaviour technician)
- Receiving a zero on an assignment/opportunity to resubmit the assignment (i.e. plagiarism, cheating, collusion)
- Parent/student/teacher conference - Parent phone call or virtual conference
- Detention (staff or administration issued)
  - Detentions must always be served. Failure to do so will result in further action; i.e contacting parents or involving the administration.
  - The administration can assign an alternate format of a detention as they see appropriate such as tutorial time or homework program. Only an administrator may change the date of a detention at their discretion. It must be understood that school-administered detentions have priority, except in clearly established extenuating circumstances.



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## ➤ Suspension

- May be assigned at the discretion of the administration. A virtual meeting between a parent, the student, and a member of the school administration must take place following a suspension for any reason. A student may not be readmitted to school until such a meeting takes place.

## Student Fees

Each family will be given an invoice with a breakdown of all costs for workbooks. Additional information will be emailed to parents regarding the collection of workbooks and other supplies.

## Frequently Asked Questions

While a significant amount of work has gone into preparing the *Virtual Learning* setting for our online students, it is to be expected that this newly established e-learning experience can be reason for some concerns and inquiries. We appreciate your understanding & patience in recognizing the budding nature of this project.

As a result, in order to continue to best respond to your needs, the EMSB has designed a FAQ link, whereby parents can consult some of the frequently asked questions concerning the *Virtual Learning* setting in order to quickly & efficiently retrieve the answers to common inquiries. Please note that this is a working document that will continuously be updated throughout the year. The most recent additions are clearly listed as **new**.

Here is the link to access the page: <https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/about/school-board/faq>

We encourage you to bookmark the link in order to facilitate its consultation.