

HSI Pandemic Mitigation Phase

Guideline on School Functions and Extra-Curricular Activities

1 Background

- Human Swine Influenza (HSI) is causing local transmission in Hong Kong and its activity may rise during summer. Although HSI causes a relatively mild illness in most persons, it is efficiently spread, given the lack of antibodies in the population, especially among children and adolescents.
- This guidance note provides guidance for schools and children in organizing and participating in summer activities. While preventing individual infection with HSI is no longer an appropriate population health objective, it is important to reduce transmission and avoid large-scale outbreaks. Generally normal societal functions and activities can and should continue without disruption.

2 General principles to reduce risk of HSI transmission

- **Segregation of persons with influenza like illness (ILI) from public:** persons with ILI should preferably rest at home till symptoms subside except for essential activities, e.g. to seek medical attention. They should wear face masks and duly observe personal hygiene to protect themselves and others around them.
- **Heightened public awareness on personal hygiene:** the most important elements are frequent and proper hand hygiene, cough etiquette and avoid touching of eyes, nose or mouth as well as the wearing of face masks when ill.
- **Enhanced protective measures for groups at risk of influenza related complications:** this entails individual risk assessment based on personal medical conditions and nature of activities. In general, very young children and those with chronic medical conditions should avoid visiting crowded and poorly ventilated places.
- **Social distancing:** this is achieved by modulating the nature of social activities and the number of participants involved.

3 General advice for schools and activity organizers

- Pay attention to announcements from the government on the latest public health policy and advice on public functions.
- Make alcohol handrub readily available at all times and ensure that hand soap is provided for in toilet facilities.
- Ensure adequate ventilation and environmental hygiene.
- Make arrangements to reduce overcrowding, taking into account the nature of the venue and activity. e.g. crowd control.
- Facilitate the implementation of personal hygiene measures, including provision of face masks.
- Plan for ways to assist people who have ILI.
- Also refer to CHP ‘**Guidelines for Prevention of Respiratory Infection for Organizers of Public Function**’ accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Guidelines%20for%20Organizers_20090522_e.pdf

4 General advice for activity participants

- Those who are sick with ILI should refrain from attending gatherings.
- At risk groups should avoid visiting overcrowded or poorly ventilated places.
- Strict adherence to personal hygienic practice. Wash hands with soap and/or use alcohol handrub frequently.
- Also refer to CHP ‘**Guidelines on Prevention of Respiratory Infection for Participants of Public Function**’ accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Guidelines_on_Prevention_of_Respiratory_Infections_en.pdf

5 Special advice for schools, including distribution of examination results, registration procedures, and summer tutorial classes

- Preparation of facilities:

- Ensure easily accessible hand hygiene facilities (e.g., soap and water, alcohol handrub).
- Clean and disinfect areas and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact regularly and also immediately when visibly soiled. For details on disinfection, please refer to CHP ‘**Advice on School Disinfection at the Height of Influenza Season**’ accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Advice_on_School_Disinfection_Eng.pdf
- Maintain room well-ventilated; if air-conditioned, ensure adequate fresh air exchange and cleaning of filters. Choose spacious settings in organizing gatherings to avoid overcrowding.
- Use of face mask is optional as an added precaution especially for those who are ill. Proper usage of masks should be emphasized. Students or staff members may choose to wear face mask unless there are contraindications e.g. breathing difficulties. Guidance on proper usage of face masks is accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/recommendations_on_use_of_face_masks_en.pdf
- Administrative control
 - Train staff regarding infection control measures, how to recognize ILI, and how to handle sick children/ students.
 - Ask participants to measure body temperature at home before attending school activities.
 - Avoid activities that involve overcrowding especially in indoor venues.
 - Notify guardians that their children should not attend school activities if they have symptoms of ILI or fever. Advise participants to stay home if sick and seek medical care.
 - Arrange for equipments to check body temperature of participants upon entry to school when there is a need.
 - For participants with underlying medical conditions, guardians should inform staff about the student’s medical needs, and seek medical advice on need of additional measures as appropriate.

- Designate staff to care for ill persons and limit their interaction with other participants. The designated staff should put on face mask and pay special attention to personal hygiene when caring for ill persons. Persons with a medical condition that increases their risk of severe illness from influenza, including pregnant women, should NOT be designated as caregivers of ill persons.
- Plan in advance with guardians regarding how illness among children attending the class will be handled.
- For the taking of examinations, refer to the CHP '**Health Advice to School for Conducting P5 Second-term Examinations during Class Suspension Period**' (Annex 1).
- Additional measures for summer tutorial classes:
 - ✓ Crowd control is essential especially in common areas like the concourse.
 - ✓ Consider staggering the timing of classes to reduce overcrowding in common areas and mixing of candidates of different classes.
 - ✓ Adjust the duration of classes as appropriate and avoid overrunning.
 - ✓ Avoid unnecessary mixing of candidates between different classes.

6 Special advice on extracurricular activities, including graduation ceremonies, outings and campings

- Follow the same advice on promotion of personal hygiene, preparation of facilities and administrative control as listed under para. 5.
- Participants with ILI should refrain from attending such activities.
- In addition, organizers are advised to observe the following:
 - Outdoor/ semi-outdoor settings is preferred.
 - Control the number of participants to avoid overcrowding, especially for indoor activities. The appropriate number of participants varies according to the size, ventilation and hygienic condition of the venue. Having fewer participants per venue

reduces the chance of HSI and other respiratory infections. Organizers are advised to limit the group size as far as practicable. Outdoor activities in well ventilated environment may allow for larger groups. Crowd control and avoidance of aggregation of people are important irrespective of group size.

- Graduation ceremonies should be well planned to avoid overrunning of the programme. It is preferable to avoid performance involving close body contact. Proper ventilation should be ensured in the venue where the ceremony takes place.
- Extra vigilance on personal hygiene for participants engaging activities with close body contact e.g. ball games.
- Ensure adequate rest time and hydration for participants with intense physical activities to avoid exhaustion.
- Avoid sharing of personal items among participants (e.g. towels, water bottles, etc.).

7 Special advice for summer study tours

- Monitor HSI situation in the place of destination.
- People with underlying chronic medical conditions should consult their doctors regarding their suitability for travel.
- Arrange for medical care at the place of destination before travel, including purchasing travel/medical insurance as required.
- For other pre-travel and post-travel advice, please refer to '**Advice for Travellers Planning to Visit Human Swine Influenza Affected Areas**' accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Advice%20to%20travellers%20planning%20to%20affected%20areas_20090522_v.pdf and '**Advice for Inbound Travellers/Returnees on Prevention of Human Swine Influenza**' accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/advice_for_Returnees_eng_20090515_f.pdf

8 Special advice for activities involving young children under 6 years old

- Young children have less capacity taking care of their own personal hygiene and they tend to have a greater intensity of direct physical contact with other children and persons.

- It is advisable to adjust the size of group activities for young children such that adequate adult supervision can be given to individual child to ensure good hygiene at all times.
- There should be adequate adult and preferably parent's supervision to ensure personal hygiene of children.
- Ball pools and other activities involving lots of simultaneous sharing of toys among many young children should be suspended.
- Toys and other objects shared by young children should be cleansed and disinfected frequently, and immediately if soiled.
- The venue should be thoroughly cleansed between each session of activities before another group of children comes in.
- For details on recommendations on infection control for recommendations for Kindergartens /Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres, please refer to the CHP '**Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools / Kindergartens /Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres**' accessible at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School_full_eng_20090115.pdf

9 Special advice for children with chronic medical conditions which may prone them to complications of influenza infection

- Crowded and poorly ventilated environment should be avoided.
- If it is unavoidable, face mask are recommended for older children and these should be worn properly.
- Pay special attention to personal hygiene.
- Seek medical advice early when there are symptoms suggestive of respiratory infection.
- Seek medical advice on need for additional measures.

10. In case of enquiry, please call CHP hotline 21251111.

Centre for Health Protection
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**Health Advice to Schools for Conducting P5 Second-term Examinations
During Class Suspension Period**

The Centre for Health Protection provides the following advice to schools which conduct P5 second-term internal examinations during the class suspension period.

General Requirements

- Schools should provide adequate hand hygiene facilities for staffs and students for hand hygiene purpose.
- Liquid soap and disposable towels or hand dryers should be made available in toilets. Alcohol handrub (70-80% alcohol content) should also be made readily available at school entrance and other locations where handwashing facilities cannot be accessed at a convenient distance.
- The school environment and school buses should be disinfected with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (one part of 5.25% hypochlorite solution in 99 parts of water) and rinse with water at least daily or on need basis.
- The use of drinking fountains should be suspended.
- Students should be advised to check for fever at home and refrain from sitting from the examination if they suspect themselves suffering from influenza like illness.

Precautionary Measures for Students *

- Students should use 70-80% alcohol-based handrub for hand hygiene after each examination session.
- Students should not be engaged in gatherings or group activities within school premises.
- Students should bring their own stationery for the examination.

Precautionary Measures for School Staff *

- To disinfect the school environment with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (one part of 5.25% hypochlorite solution in 99 parts of water) and rinse with water before re-opening of school for exam.
- Staff should observe good personal hygiene especially cough etiquette and hand hygiene.

Venue for school examination

- Examination should be taken in classrooms instead of school hall to avoid gathering a large number of students in the same confined area.
- The tables and chairs should be arranged in single row and facing one direction.
- Adequate spacing should be kept between each student during examination.
- Good indoor ventilation should be maintained. Open windows wide and turn on exhaust fans. Alternatively, if the air conditioner is on, make sure that air conditioning system allows an adequate amount of fresh air. Air filters should be clean and well-maintained.
- Alcohol handrub, disposable tissue paper, surgical masks and lidded rubbish bins should be made available in each classroom.
- The classrooms should be thoroughly disinfected with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (one part of 5.25% hypochlorite solution in 99 parts of water) and rinse with water after each session or on need basis.

Before school examination

- Schools should arrange for equipments for temperature checks for students before admitting into examination venue if student cannot produce temperature record. Those with temperature > 38 degrees Celsius (by tympanic method) or equivalent should not be admitted.
- Students should not be allowed to attend examination if they have fever, together with sore throat, cough or other respiratory symptoms. They should put on a mask and seek medical care immediately. Parents should be asked to pick them up.

- No assembly should be arranged for students. Schools should arrange students to enter the examination room in small group.

During the examination

- If students feel sick during the exam, he/she should report to his/her teacher. The sick student should be advised to put on surgical mask (if not worn) and should be escorted away from the examination area to isolation room by teacher. Parents should be informed and immediate medical consultation should be advised.

After school examination

- Students should leave school after the examination immediately and should not stay in school unless situation absolutely warrants.
- Schools should arrange students to leave in small groups.
- * Note on face mask use: Use of face mask is an additional precautionary measure. Student or staff may choose to wear face mask unless there is contraindications. e.g. breathing difficulties. Proper usage of masks should be emphasized.

http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/recommendations_on_use_of_face_masks_en.pdf

Further information on health advice related to HSI can be accessed through <http://www.chp.gov.hk>

Infection Control Branch
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