

Supplementary Notes on Using Special Rooms in Flexible Timetabling

Introduction

The report on the New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education has recommended that schools should provide a broad and balanced curriculum to cater for students' diverse needs. Schools are encouraged to arrange flexible grouping of different subjects to provide more choices for students. In this connection, schools will have a greater need for conducting lessons of different subjects in special rooms (such as science laboratories, workshops and Geography room). Provided that sufficient safety measures are taken, schools can make the best use of the teaching space and facilities to support a diversified curriculum. This document aims to provide some principles for schools to facilitate the necessary arrangement.

General Principles

1. Given the condition of space in Hong Kong schools, principals and teachers are encouraged to maximise the use of special rooms and deploy these important resources flexibly in order to facilitate their delivery of a broad and balanced spectrum of subjects to meet the diverse interests and needs of their students. **Provided that sufficient safety measures are taken**, special rooms including workshops and laboratories can be flexibly deployed for classroom learning and teaching, and should not be confined to practical activities only.
2. Timetables for the use of the special rooms should be made accessible to all teachers. There should be early and effective communication between the corresponding subject panel heads, staff responsible for the operation of these special rooms (e.g. laboratory technicians) and the teachers who will use the rooms in order to achieve a viable and efficient arrangement of using these special rooms for lessons or activities. In this regard, schools are encouraged to set some procedures, e.g. a central booking system to facilitate the use of special rooms by teachers of other subjects.
3. Relevant regulations governing the number of students in some particular special rooms or workshop must be observed. For some special rooms such as computer rooms, a smaller number of students are desirable due to the nature of the practical activities to be conducted as well as the provision of equipment. The seating capacities of these rooms could, however, be flexibly adjusted when conducting lessons of other subjects if the arrangement does not cause concerns about safety or health.
4. As a special room is designed with features that are essential/suitable for the learning

and teaching of a particular subject, this subject should be accorded a higher priority in using the special room.

5. To ensure a safe learning environment for students, the following general safety measures should be observed:

- The special rooms should be kept clean and tidy. All exits and passages should be kept clear and all exit doors should be unlocked when the special rooms are in use.
- All the special instruments, equipment, teaching tools and consumables/chemicals, should be properly kept and stored. Dangerous tools and hazardous chemicals should be properly locked.
- Students must be familiar with all the escape routes through regular emergency drills.
- Students are not allowed to remove anything from any of the special rooms without permission.
- Students should not eat or drink in the special rooms, particularly where the sites may be easily contaminated with chemicals or harmful substances.
- Maintenance of good class discipline in special rooms is essential. Students should not rush around or play in the special rooms. They should not tamper with any equipment, electrical appliances and materials stored in the special rooms.
- Students must not be left unsupervised in any of the special rooms. The teacher who wants to leave a class briefly must arrange for temporary supervision by another staff.

6. For further enquiries on using specific special rooms, schools may contact the following relevant KLA sections:

<u>KLA</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Science Education	3698 3439	science@edb.gov.hk
Technology Education	3698 3145	teched@edb.gov.hk
Arts Education	3698 3539	arts@edb.gov.hk
Personal, Social and Humanities Education	2892 5898	ccdopshe@edb.gov.hk

7. In addition to the above general guidelines, teachers and students should also refer to the specific guidelines on using different special rooms listed in the Appendix attached.

Specific guidelines on using special rooms

A. Science laboratories

1. Laboratories with movable benches, such as laboratories of Integrated Science, Biology and Physics, are considered more suitable for conducting lessons and activities. Island benches in Chemistry laboratory with gas, sinks, electricity installed are less suitable for students to sit around and conduct various learning activities.
2. Students are not allowed to enter any of the laboratories unless a teacher is present.
3. Broken glass and chemical spillages must be cleaned up immediately.
4. The gas mains of the laboratories should be turned off when not in use.
5. Teachers and students are advised to wash their hands before leaving the laboratories.

B. Special rooms and workshops under Technology Education Key Learning Area

1. In the Home Economics Room and workshop(s), areas installed with fixed stoves and heavy machines are not desirable for students to sit around and/or conducting learning activities for other non-practical subject(s).
2. Students are not allowed to enter the workshop(s) unless a teacher is present.
3. Teachers should be aware of the location of the main switches of electricity and gas supply and the fire extinguisher, if any, in the special room or workshop. The electrical and gaseous equipment and appliances should be turned off when not in use.
4. Teachers should lock the door(s) of the special room or workshop when they are not in use.
5. Students should not disassemble any part of the computer facilities or install any hardware or software in the computer without permission.

C. Visual Arts room

1. The electric kiln should be, as far as possible, installed in the store room or kiln room with good ventilation. The kiln door should be fitted with a lock to prevent students from opening it during the fire process. If the electric kiln can only be installed in the Visual Arts room, even when the kiln is partitioned with solid panels, it is not desirable to arrange learning activities for students in this special room when the electric kiln is in operation.
2. The electrical appliances and water tap should be turned off when not in use.
3. Teachers and students are advised to wash hands before leaving the Visual Arts room.

D. Music room

1. Furniture and stacking chairs should be resumed to the original position after use.
2. No objects are allowed to be placed on top of any musical instruments such as a piano,

glockenspiel and timpani.

E. Geography room

1. For furniture like sand table and map chest, and equipment like GIS computer system which do not contain any lock, the school management should consider whether it is essential to install an additional lock or relocate them to the Geography resource room.

Reference:

1. Education Department. (2002). *Safety in science laboratories*. Hong Kong Printing Department (http://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/science/laboratory/safety/SHB_2002e.pdf)
2. CLEAPSS. (2001). *Laboratory Handbook*. School Science Service, Brunel University
3. The Government of Hong Kong SAR. (2000) *Education Regulations*.
4. Education Bureau (2005). School Administration Guide Part 3.4.4 (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=681&langno=1>).
5. Hong Kong Education Department. (2000). *Teaching Home Economics in Secondary Schools – Safety Booklet*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Printing Department. (http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_3139/safebooklet.pdf)
6. Schools Miscellaneous Circular No. 3/2000 - Safety Precautions in the Teaching of Home Economics in Secondary Schools (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/UtilityManager/circular/upload/SMC/MC00003E.PDF>)
7. The Government of Hong Kong SAR (2003). Safety in School Workshops (http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_4665/SAFETY_IN_SCHOOL_WORKSHOPS_ENG.pdf).
8. Education Department. (2002). *Guidelines on Safety for Art and Design in Secondary Schools*. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China. (For details of the Guidelines, please visit the webpage of the “References & Resources” at <http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/ae>)