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Government of the HKSAR
Education and Manpower Bureau

10 April 2007

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR NO. 4/2007

(Formerly referred as EMB Circular No. 4/2007)

**Tropical Cyclones and Heavy Persistent Rain
Arrangements for Evening Schools**

[Note: This circular should be read by -

- (a) Supervisors and heads of all **evening** schools - for action
- (b) Heads of all sections - for information]

SUMMARY

The purpose of this circular is to inform evening schools of the detailed arrangements under the inclement weather conditions and the launch of a new webpage “Weather Information for Schools” on the website of the Hong Kong Observatory. Two identical seminars in April 2007 have been arranged to facilitate school personnel’s understanding of the detailed arrangements. This circular serves to supersede the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) Circular No. 4/2005 dated 14 April 2005 on the same subject.

DETAILS

- 2. This circular concerns the safety of students and staff. All schools should comply with all the arrangements and advice accordingly.
- 3. These arrangements apply:
 - (a) in the event of tropical cyclones or heavy persistent rain;
and

- (b) upon change of weather conditions at the time of public examinations.

4. Special attention is drawn to the different arrangements in case of tropical cyclones and heavy persistent rain. The development of tropical cyclones is progressive and the effects are more lasting. With the announcement of suspension of school in case of tropical cyclones, schools should arrange students to return home under safe conditions. For heavy persistent rain, however, adverse situation could develop quickly and dissipate quickly. Therefore, schools should continue their lessons when red/black rainstorm signal is issued during lesson time and should not send students home immediately. (Please refer to paragraphs 5 and 7 below for detailed arrangements.)

Tropical Cyclones

5. Schools should listen to radio or television announcements when tropical cyclones affect Hong Kong. The following general arrangements will apply and appropriate public announcements will be made:

Weather condition	Action to be taken
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 1 is issued	All schools are to operate as usual.
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 is issued	All schools are to operate as usual unless advised otherwise.
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal Pre-No.8/ No. 8 or above is issued*	All schools are to close.
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is replaced by Signal No. 3	Schools are to resume if Signal No. 8 is replaced before 5:00 p.m. and no previous announcement has been made to the effect that schools will close for the whole day.

* If students have already set out for school when the Pre-No. 8 / No. 8 signal is issued, schools should activate the contingency plan to ensure that school premises will be open and staffed until proper arrangements are made for arriving students to return home at an appropriate time.

Heavy Persistent Rain

6. Schools should listen to radio or television announcements regularly during rainstorms. For more detailed information regarding rainfall distribution, schools may visit the webpage of the Hong Kong Observatory at the following URL:

<http://www.hko.gov.hk/wxinfo/rainfall/isohyete.shtml>

7. In the event of rainstorms, the following general arrangements will apply and appropriate public announcements will be made:

Rainstorm warning signal	Action to be taken
AMBER	✧ All schools are to operate as usual.
RED or BLACK	
(i) 5.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.	✧ Evening schools will be closed.
(ii) 6.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.	✧ There will be no lessons for evening schools. ✧ Evening schools should ensure that their school premises are open and arrange staff to look after those students who have left home for school. They should also ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.
(iii) 7.00 p.m. – 11.00 p.m.	✧ Evening schools should continue the lessons until the end of the normal school hours and should ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.

Flooding in Northern New Territories

8. A “Special Announcement on Flooding in the northern New Territories” (SAFNNT) will be issued by the Hong Kong Observatory whenever heavy rain affects the northern New Territories and flooding is expected to occur or is occurring over the area. Once issued, it will be

broadcast over radio and television. Heads of schools in northern New Territories should assess their own vulnerability to flooding on the basis of past experience and with the advice from the Drainage Services Department where it is available, and decide whether their schools should be closed when a SAFNNT is issued. If it is necessary, schools may contact the Emergency Duty Team of the EMB to make announcements as detailed at paragraphs 10 and 14 below.

Landslip

9. In addition, schools with slopes within or near the school boundary should pay particular attention to Landslip Warnings issued to alert the public of the high risk of landslips from persistent heavy rain. School heads should refer to the [EMB Circular No. 25/98](#) dated 29 July 1998 on “Administrative Procedures for Safety of Schools in the Vicinity of Slopes” and take necessary precautionary measures.

Emergency Duty Team

10. When tropical cyclone Signal No. 3 or the AMBER rainstorm signal is issued on a school day, the EMB will activate an Emergency Duty Team in the headquarters to collect updated information on weather, road, slope, traffic and transport conditions. It will arrange for radio and television announcements on closure of schools or cancellation of activities. The team will be ready to assist any school wishing to make an announcement. Schools using the service should fax the announcement (sample at the Appendix) to the Emergency Duty Team and then follow up by telephone before 5.45 p.m.

Fax no.: 2575 7050
Telephone no.: 2892 6193-96 (4 lines)

11. Upon receipt of the announcement, the Emergency Duty Team will fax the announcement to the electronic media. However, TV/radio stations have their own discretion to broadcast the announcement.

Closure of Schools and Launching of New Webpage

12. If schools are in session and the weather is likely to deteriorate rapidly due to approaching typhoon or special circumstances, the EMB will announce over radio and television to advise closure of schools or suspension of classes. (Please refer to paragraphs 5 and 7 above.)

13. In exceptional circumstances, the EMB may announce the closure of schools in only one or just a few districts. In that case, students whose schools are in that/those district(s) as well as students who are living in that/those districts should not go to school. School heads should therefore ensure that their staff and students know the district at which their schools are located and the district in which they live. This should be checked at the beginning of each school year.

14. For more information regarding regional weather, schools may visit the webpage “Weather Information for Schools” on the website of the Hong Kong Observatory at the following URL:

<http://www.weather.gov.hk/school/main.shtml>

School heads may exercise their discretion on closure of schools should local weather, road, slope, traffic or transport conditions warrant the closure of a school and a general announcement has not been made by the EMB, or giving allowance to affected students for being late or absent from school due to inclement weather. If a school head decides to close the school, he should notify the School Development Section concerned as soon as possible. In such a case, the school head should also contact the Emergency Duty Team in the EMB headquarters to arrange for an announcement to be made. (For details, please refer to paragraph 10 above.) The announcement should, as far as possible, be made before students set out for school.

Public Examinations

15. Closure of schools, particularly those used as centres for public examinations, as a result of tropical cyclones or heavy persistent rain does not necessarily imply the postponement of a public examination scheduled for that day. School heads should listen to radio or television announcements made separately by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority regarding arrangements of the public examinations.

16. Unless an announcement has been made that a public examination is cancelled or postponed, it should be assumed that the examination will be held as scheduled. Schools to be used as examination centres should therefore remain open for examination purposes.

Formulation of Contingency Plans

17. School heads are requested to ensure and take forward the following:

(a) Schools should draw up a contingency plan in advance to deal with closure of school or suspension of classes due to inclement weather. The contingency plan should be sufficiently comprehensive to cover all likely situations pertaining to the school during inclement weather and that the courses of action to be taken are practical and understood by all concerned. The contingency plan should therefore be worked out in consultation with teachers and others involved so that they will co-operate fully to avoid misunderstanding or disputes. Moreover, school heads should take account of the safety of all parties concerned in drawing up the contingency plan.

(b) If the EMB announces the closure of schools after some students have set out for school, school heads should activate their contingency plan to ensure that the school premises will be open, that some teachers living close by will be at school to look after students arriving and that safe and proper arrangements are made for students to return home at an appropriate time.

(c) If schools are in session when EMB announces the immediate suspension of classes, school heads should also activate the contingency plan to ensure that their students are kept in school until safe and proper arrangements have been made for them to return home at an appropriate time. An announcement on closure of school or suspension of classes does not mean sending all students home immediately.

(d) Alternative arrangements should be made regarding school tests or examinations for those students who cannot return to school or arrive late because of inclement weather, road, slope, traffic or transport conditions. School heads should also re-assure that those students will not be penalised under such exceptional circumstances.

(e) School staff and students should be fully informed of the above arrangements and the contingency plan by circular letters.

Seminars

18. Two identical seminars on “Tropical Cyclones and Heavy Persistent Rain Arrangements for Schools” have been scheduled on 13 April 2007 and 30 April 2007. Please refer to the Training Calendar available on the EMB website for details.

Enquiries

19. For enquiries, please contact your respective School Development Officers or our Information and Public Relations officers at 2892 6198.

Mrs. Michelle WONG
for Secretary for Education and Manpower

XXX Evening School
xxx Sha Tau Kok Road, Fanling, New Territories

“Here is a special announcement by XXX Evening School:

Due to deteriorating weather conditions, the Final Examination of XXX Evening School scheduled for today (5 July) will be postponed. Students will be informed of the new date for the Final Examination later.”

5 July 2007

School
Chop

Enquiries : XXX Chan, School Head
Telephone : XXXXXXXX