



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref.: EDB(SDCT)2/ADM/60/1/1(13)

電話 Telephone:

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

傳真 Fax Line:

26 August 2015

To: Supervisors/Principals of all Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

**Stay Vigilant against the Spread of
Communicable Diseases in Schools**

The new school year is approaching. To facilitate schools' preparation of preventive measures against the spread of various communicable diseases such as hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), chickenpox, influenza and dengue fever, schools are advised to refer to the letter issued to all schools dated 25 August by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (Appendix I). Schools should stay vigilant and put in place the various hygienic and preventive measures against communicable diseases, including the following:

Maintaining a clean and hygienic school environment

- Cleanse and disinfect the school premises thoroughly before the commencement of the new school term. Always keep the school environment clean and hygienic.
- Maintain good indoor ventilation. If air-conditioning is used, the air filters should be cleaned and replaced regularly. The system should also be properly maintained.

Disseminating messages on prevention of communicable diseases and reviewing contingency measures

- For more effective prevention against the spread of communicable diseases in the campus, schools should assign designated staff or a crisis management team to coordinate and oversee matters relating to the hygienic conditions of the school environment and to brief students/staff and parents on the relevant preventive measures.

- Schools should observe the “Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools/ Kindergartens/ Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres/ Child Care Centres” issued by CHP to implement the preventive measures properly and review the contingency measures from time to time so that such measures can be implemented immediately when needed. Schools can get access to the aforesaid Guidelines via the following path:

EDB Homepage (www.edb.gov.hk)> School Administration and Management> Administration> About School> Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools> B. Guidelines/ Useful Materials

- Schools should set up a mechanism for collecting the personal and contact information of students/staff members and notify parents that where necessary, information and contact details of students suspected of being infected would be released to CHP or relevant departments for effective implementation of control measures against communicable diseases.
- Remind students/staff to pay attention to personal hygiene and assist in promoting health messages on prevention of communicable diseases. Schools can download the relevant health reference/promotional materials and video clips, etc. from the CHP’s website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>). For enquiries, please contact the Central Health Education Unit of the Department of Health during office hours (Tel No.: 2572 1476).
- Enlist parents’ co-operation in paying attention to students’ personal and environmental hygiene so as to tie in with the preventive measures taken by schools.
 — A sample letter to parents is enclosed for reference (Appendix II).

Early reporting of suspected outbreak cases of communicable diseases

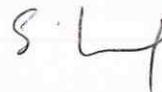
- If a suspected outbreak of communicable disease occurs in school or an increasing trend or unusual situation in the number of persons taking sick leave with similar symptoms or due to the same infectious disease (for example, three or more students in the same class develop symptoms of respiratory tract infections or two or more students in the same class develop symptoms of HFMD in succession within a short time), schools should report the case to the Central Notification Office of CHP immediately (Fax No.: 2477 2770; Tel No.: 2477 2772) by completing the “Suspected Infectious Disease Outbreak in School/ Kindergarten /KG-cum-CCC /Child Care Centre Notification Form” to facilitate CHP’s early epidemiological investigation and outbreak control. Schools should also forward a copy of the Notification Form to their respective Regional Education Offices (REO) /Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres (JOKC).
- Schools should also keep in close contact with CHP for their keeping track of the latest communicable disease outbreak situation of schools.

Observing guidelines in handling class suspension matters

- If schools consider that the increasing trend of infected cases might warrant class suspension, they are required to consult the officer of CHP and confirm the situation with the respective REO/ JOKC before arriving at any decision. Taking into consideration the situation at the time, including the number of children affected, severely ill or hospitalized, the progression of the outbreak and the effectiveness of control measures, CHP would advise schools whether class suspension is needed. Schools should maintain close contact with CHP and this Bureau in this respect so that appropriate advice and support could be rendered.

This Bureau will continue to keep in close contact with CHP and release the latest information of communicable diseases to schools through emails. For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers/ Senior Services Officers.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms S W Wong)

for Secretary for Education

監測及流行病學處



Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (11) in DH SEB CD/13/1
來函檔號 Your Ref :
電話 Tel. :
傳真 Fax No. : (852) 2711 4847

25 August 2015

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge / Teacher,

Stay Vigilant Against Communicable Diseases in Coming School Year

As the new school year is approaching, we would like to take this opportunity to urge you to maintain vigilance against communicable diseases at child care centres, kindergartens and schools.

Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common disease in children caused by enteroviruses such as coxsackie viruses and enterovirus 71 (EV71). In 2015, the activity of HFMD started to increase in May and remained at high level in August. The number of reported cases of EV71 infection was similar to that in the same period of last year while the number of severe enterovirus infections (SE) other than EV71 and poliovirus was less than the same period of last year. It is expected that the HFMD activity will continue to remain at a high level after the start of the new school year.

Chickenpox is a highly communicable viral disease, and is the most commonly reported notifiable infectious disease in Hong Kong. Seasonally, the number of chickenpox cases usually starts to rise in October and peaks in December and January. Institutional outbreaks of chickenpox occur commonly in the community with the majority in pre-primary institutions (including kindergartens, child care centres, etc.) as well as primary and secondary schools.



衛生防護中心乃衛生署
轄下執行疾病預防
及控制的專業架構
The Centre for Health
Protection is a
professional arm of the
Department of Health for
disease prevention and
control

As for influenza, there were seven reported institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks affecting 31 persons in the recent four weeks (as of 22 August). Although influenza activity currently remains at low level, schools and parents should continue to stay vigilant against influenza as it can cause serious illness

even in healthy children.

Dengue fever is an acute febrile viral illness characterised by high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, rash, muscle and joint pain. The disease is transmitted by mosquito. The symptoms of first infection are usually mild, but subsequent infections from other serotypes of dengue virus may result in severe dengue and progress to circulatory failure, shock and even death. Dengue fever activity is high in our neighbouring areas, including popular tourist attractions in southeast Asia, Guangdong and Taiwan. To prevent dengue fever, child care centres, kindergartens and schools should conduct regular inspection, eliminate any pocket of stagnant water and maintain good environmental hygiene to prevent mosquito breeding.

To prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases, students/children who develop skin rash, fever, acute respiratory symptoms, diarrhea or vomiting are strongly advised not to attend school and should seek medical advice. Besides, child care centres, kindergartens and schools should take measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, e.g., remind students/children and staff members to observe good personal, food and environmental hygiene, avoid sharing clothing and slippers among students/children, etc. For details, please refer to the “**Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools /Kindergartens /Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres /Child Care Centres**”, which is accessible on the website of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) at:

http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_care_centres.pdf

If you suspect any outbreaks occurring in your institution, please report to the Central Notification Office of CHP as early as possible for prompt epidemiological investigations and outbreak control (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770). Child care centres, kindergartens and schools should set up a mechanism for collecting personal particulars and contact information of students/children and staff members. They should also inform parents at the beginning of the new school year that the conditions and contact details of students/children will be released to CHP and other relevant departments for disease control purpose when necessary.

For the latest information on communicable diseases, please visit CHP's webpages below:

- HFMD and EV71 infection (www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/16354.html);
- Chickenpox (www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/24/15.html);

- Influenza (www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html); and
- Dengue fever (www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/38847.html).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S K Chuang', is centered on the page.

(Dr. S K CHUANG)
For Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

[Sample Letter to Parents]

(This sample letter is for reference only. Individual schools should edit the sample letter in the light of their own situation.)

xx September 2015

Dear Parents,

1. As advised by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), outbreaks of communicable diseases such as hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), chickenpox, influenza and dengue fever may occur in institutions and schools from time to time.
2. Therefore, before the commencement of the new school year, we have thoroughly cleaned and disinfected the school premises. We would also urge all students/staff members to pay attention to their personal hygiene and environmental hygiene of the school.
3. For students' health sake, we would appeal to you that in addition to maintaining a clean and healthy household environment, please remind your children to constantly observe personal hygiene and keep the school environment clean. Please take note of the following measures:
 - Seek medical advice as soon as possible if your children develop symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting and skin rash. If symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough or influenza are developed, they should put on a mask immediately and seek medical care promptly. Please also notify the school and let the children stay at home for rest until symptoms have improved and fever has subsided for at least two days, or follow the medical advice on sick leave, whichever is longer.
 - Children with HFMD should stay at home for rest until fever has subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted. As an extra precaution, if enterovirus 71 is confirmed to be the pathogen, children should take 2 more weeks of sick leave after all vesicles have dried up.
 - Inform the school immediately if children are sick or have been admitted to hospital for surveillance. Such information and contact details of students would be reported to CHP or relevant government departments on a need basis to help institute effective control measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
 - Co-operate with the school by picking up children not feeling well from school and consulting the doctor immediately.
 - Provide children with handkerchiefs or tissue papers and remind them not to share towels or tissue papers with others.
 - Remind children to keep hands clean, cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of used tissue paper properly.

- Before sending children to school, measure their body temperature, record the reading and sign the temperature record sheet which should be handed to the school every day. Attached please find a copy of the “Temperature Record Sheet”.
4. At the beginning of the new school year, we have urged drivers and attendants of school buses/nanny vans not to drive/board these vehicles and make appropriate arrangements if they have a fever or any symptoms of communicable diseases. They should also inform the school and parents of the situation immediately,
 5. In case of any students being absent due to sickness, we would provide learning support for them so that their learning progress would not be affected.
 6. We would like to appeal to parents again for co-operation in maintaining a clean and healthy household environment. Please also remind your children to pay attention to personal hygiene and to take all necessary preventive measures against communicable diseases.

Signature of Principal
Principal of (school name)