



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)3/PRO/10/1/1(1)

電話 Telephone:

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

傳真 Fax Line:

23 February 2017

To: Supervisors/Principals of All Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

**Stay Vigilant against the Spread of Influenza and other Respiratory Infections
Additional Measure on Temperature Monitoring**

According to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the local activity of seasonal influenza has continued to increase in the past few weeks, signaling that Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season. A copy of the letter issued by the CHP is enclosed at the Appendix for your reference.

In view of the latest development of the communicable disease, we would like to urge schools to put in place the additional measure on temperature monitoring according to the advice provided in the attached letter. Schools are also advised to disseminate information on the suggested measures on preventing influenza and other respiratory tract infections to parents and enlist their cooperation to upkeep students' personal and environmental hygiene so as to tie in with the precautionary measures taken by schools against the spread of influenza in schools. Please also advise parents to avoid visiting crowded or poorly-ventilated public places with their children as far as possible. Parents should take notice of the health conditions of their children. Children with fever should seek medical advice promptly and should avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided.

Early reporting of suspected outbreak cases of communicable diseases

If a suspected outbreak of communicable disease occurs in school or there is 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 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).

In addition, 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.

Observing guidelines in handling class suspension matters

When schools consider school-based class suspension on the ground of outbreak of communicable disease according to EDBC No. 9/2015 “Handling Emergency Situations in Schools”, 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.

We will continue to keep in close contact with the CHP and release the latest information on communicable diseases to schools.

For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers/Senior Services Officers.

Yours sincerely,



(K K Lee)

for Secretary for Education

監測及流行病學處



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

保障市民健康
Protecting Hong Kong's health

Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (62) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.21

February 22, 2017

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Arrival of Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong and Additional Measure
on Temperature Monitoring**

We would like to inform you that the local activity of seasonal influenza has continued to increase in the past few weeks, signaling that Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season. The percentage positive for seasonal influenza viruses increased gradually from 6.20 per cent in the first week of January to 9.12 per cent last week among respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). Majority of the influenza virus detected in the past four weeks were influenza A(H3N2) (86.8%).

Besides, the number of outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) in institutions and schools has increased from one outbreak in the week ending February 11 to 13 outbreaks last week, affecting 95 persons in total. In the first three days of this week (February 19-21), eight ILI outbreaks affecting a total of 27 persons have already been recorded. In the above period, the outbreaks occurred in primary schools (41 per cent), kindergartens or child care centres (23 per cent), residential care homes for the elderly (23 per cent), secondary schools (9 per cent) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (4 per cent).

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are prone to influenza infection and its complications. As schools and organisations are collective assembly places, infectious diseases such as influenza could be easily spread among people through their daily contacts. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or students (especially those having active symptoms). In this regard, we would like to urge you to reinforce preventive measures in schools, kindergartens and child care centres so as to mitigate the impact of seasonal influenza.



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

In this influenza season, schools should actively check the body temperature of all students every day during this influenza season when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever.

To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever (oral temperature higher than 37.5°C, or ear temperature higher than 38°C), regardless of the presence of respiratory symptom, should not be allowed to attend school. They should be advised to seek medical advice and should avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Staff should also check their temperature before work every day and staff with respiratory illnesses or fever should refrain from work.

It is also important to measure and record students' body temperature properly. Please refer to Section 2.3 of the 'Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools / Kindergartens / Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres' published by the CHP for detailed information on monitoring of body temperature, which can be accessed 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

In addition, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands properly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Wear surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly if symptoms of respiratory tract infection or fever develop;
- Maintain good ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places when influenza is prevalent; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

If you notice an increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among children/ students, clients or staff, please report promptly to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit the CHP's pages below for more information:

- The influenza page (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html); and
- The weekly Flu Express report (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/2108.html).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK Chuang', is positioned above the printed name.

(Dr. SK Chuang)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health