

Guidelines on Conducting Physical Activities for the Prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The guidelines are prepared based on the Health Advice to schools from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and the Safety Guidelines on Physical Education Key Learning Area For Hong Kong Schools. We will duly update based on the latest recommendations of the CHP and release via the webpage (What's New) of the Physical Education (PE) Key Learning Area of EDB.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, schools are advised to take the following measures for conducting PE lessons and related co-curricular physical activities. Regarding the safety precautions on conducting online PE lessons, please refer to Item 3.1.

1. Preventive Measures

- 1.1 As indoor exercise carries higher risk of disease transmission, especially for exercise with high intensity, outdoor exercise is encouraged. Activities during which masks can be worn will be at lower risk than those where masks cannot be worn.
- 1.2 **On school premises:** During physical activities indoors, students should wear masks as far as possible, have low-intensity¹ physical activities, and keep social distancing for at least 1 metre. If students have moderate or vigorous intensity physical activities outdoors or swimming activities² in which masks cannot be tolerated, keep social distancing for at least 1.5 metres.
- 1.3 **Outside school premises:** Schools should observe the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and its annex³, and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) and adopt the relevant preventive measures as specified on the related premises to facilitate the arrangement of suitable physical activities for students, under circumstances where the exemption from the mask-on requirement is given.
- 1.4 Moderate- or vigorous-intensity physical activities may lead to an increase in heart rate and breathing⁴. Wearing masks during physical activities causes difficulty in breathing and increases the chance of a lack of oxygen and dizziness. Therefore, students should not

¹ Leaflet on *Know your Physical Activity Level*: Low-intensity physical activities are simple, light and easy to do. (https://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/sportforall/common/pdf/leaflet_e.pdf).

² If the swimming pools on school premises are open, schools should comply with the precautionary measures adopted for swimming pools managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Schools should also ensure that relevant Government requirements as stipulated on Cap. 599F, "Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation" and related regulations are complied with, and proper infection control measures are in place.

³ Please refer to requirements as specified in the latest press releases on "Government extends social distancing measures under Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance" and its Annex, "Summary of latest measures on catering business and scheduled premises".

⁴ According to World Health Organisation, moderate-intensity physical activity requires a moderate amount of effort and noticeably accelerates the heart rate; vigorous-intensity physical activity requires a large amount of effort and causes rapid breathing and a substantial increase in heart rate. (https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/physical_activity_intensity/en/).

- wear masks when taking part in moderate- or vigorous-intensity physical activities.
- 1.5 For safety reasons, mask-wearing is not recommended for students with difficulty breathing (e.g. students with asthma) or those who need assistance to remove the mask (e.g. students with hand injuries or with special needs who have difficulties removing their masks).
 - 1.6 Schools should arrange students to wear sports uniform on school days when there are PE lessons and related co-curricular physical activities as far as possible to avoid overcrowding in changing rooms, e.g. using half of the capacity or keeping at least 1.5m between users.
 - 1.7 PE lessons should be conducted in venues with good ventilation. Schools should maintain good indoor ventilation. To enhance air flow, schools should keep the windows/doors of school halls, classrooms and special rooms open and/or switch on fans or exhaust fans. If the air-conditioning system is used, schools should ensure there is sufficient fresh air supply and the dust-filters are cleaned regularly.
 - 1.8 Sports venues, lockers and changing rooms should be cleaned and disinfected regularly. Regarding disinfection, first use 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water) to wipe, leave for 15-30 minutes, and then rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
 - 1.9 Students should be reminded to observe personal hygiene. Before and after doing exercise, they should wash their hands thoroughly and avoid sharing their personal items, e.g. towels and water bottles. As the masks may be wetted by sweat during exercise, students should be reminded to bring additional face masks for replacement.
 - 1.10 The physical fitness level of students may be different from before the pandemic. Teachers should adjust the exercise intensity of PE lessons and related co-curricular physical activities. Students should be reminded to observe their health condition to see whether they are fit for doing physical activities. If students feel unwell, they should inform their teachers and seek medical treatment as soon as possible.

2. Teaching Recommendations

2.1 Guiding Principles

- 2.1.1 The content of the curriculum and assessment should be adjusted appropriately. Learning activities with focus on training aerobic capacity exercise are preferred, e.g. stretching and aerobics. Taking into consideration students' ability, the exercise workload and intensity should be adjusted, and the intensity and learning effectiveness should be increased progressively. (please also refer to Item 1.1 to 1.3).
- 2.1.2 Teachers should provide online learning resources on selected individual exercise that can be done at home so as to teach students to work out a plan for self-training and to extend their learning beyond lessons; and encourage students to participate in physical activities on a daily basis.

- 2.1.3 Students should avoid sharing sports equipment. The equipment should be cleaned and disinfected properly after use each time. It is recommended to refrain from using hard-to-clean equipment and facilities, such as training bands and yoga blocks.
- 2.1.4 Schools should arrange physical activities in a non-contact fashion and in small groups. Activities that involve a shared object like ball games can be arranged provided that proper social distance between students can be maintained and hand hygiene performed.
- 2.1.5 Teachers should introduce PE theory during lessons appropriately, some topics of which include a balanced diet, regular exercise and adequate rest. Teachers should draw on the experience of the pandemic to encourage students to maintain a healthy lifestyle and build up good body immunity.
- 2.1.6 In general, schools should not organise mass events such as sports days or swimming galas. The EDB will take into account the latest development of the epidemic and adjust the guidelines from time to time. Schools should refer to the latest letters and “Health Protection Measures for Schools” issued by the EDB to make appropriate arrangements. Please refer to the following webpage for details about “Health Protection Measures for Schools”, <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-sch/diseases-prevention/guidelines-covid19.html>

2.2 Before PE Lessons

- 2.2.1 Teachers should check venues and equipment.
- 2.2.2 Teachers should pay attention to the health condition of students and check whether they are fit for physical activities. If students feel unwell or have respiratory symptoms, they should not take part in PE lessons and related co-curricular activities. They should inform their teachers and seek medical treatment as soon as possible.
- 2.2.3 Students have to perform hand hygiene and place their masks properly after removing them for taking part in physical activities.

2.3 During PE Lessons

- 2.3.1 Teachers should ensure a proper social distancing between students during physical activities.
- 2.3.2 Teachers should always observe students’ physical condition. Teachers should adjust the amount and intensity of exercise according to students’ fitness level, and remind them to increase exercise intensity progressively according to their own capacity.
- 2.3.3 Students should be reminded that if they have difficulty breathing when doing physical activities, they should stop, remove their masks and inform their teachers immediately. Teachers should check students’ health condition to see if they are fit for continuing with the physical activities.
- 2.3.4 Students should also be reminded to inform their teachers immediately if they find their classmate(s) feeling unwell.

2.3.5 Students should avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth during exercise. They should wash their hands beforehand if necessary.

2.4 After PE Lessons

2.4.1 Students should wash their hands properly and wear masks before leaving the venues.

2.4.2 Teachers should remind students to have adequate rest and replenish water to prevent excessive loss of water from the body.

3. Online Teaching

3.1 Safety Precautions for Conducting Online Physical Education Lessons and Learning and Teaching Resources

https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/pe/web_based_teaching/index.html



3.2 Doing Physical Activities at Home - Online Teaching Resources

https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/pe/Doing_Physical_Activities_at_Home/index.html



4. Related Webpage

4.1 Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of COVID-19

<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102742.html>



4.2 Safety Guidelines on Physical Education Key Learning Area For Hong Kong Schools

https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/pe/references_resource/safety-guidelines/Safe_e.pdf

