

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (165) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.22

February 8, 2019

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**Stay Vigilant Against Seasonal Influenza after Lunar
New Year Holiday**

We would like to urge you to continue your vigilance against seasonal influenza when schools resume after the Lunar New Year holiday. The influenza surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health showed that the local influenza activity has decreased from the peak level recorded during January 13-26. This winter influenza season in Hong Kong is expected to last for some time.

The CHP has also recorded a significant drop in institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks, from the peak of 211 cases (affecting 1010 persons) in the week ending January 26 to 31 cases (affecting 127 persons) in that ending February 2.

Young children, elderly people and patients with chronic diseases are prone to influenza infection and its complications. As schools 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 continue preventive measures in schools, kindergartens and child care centres after the Lunar New Year holiday so as to mitigate the impact of seasonal influenza.



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. This additional measure should continue until the local influenza activity returns to the baseline level. By then, the CHP will

issue another letter to inform you.

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_are_centres.pdf.

If you notice an increase in fever/respiratory illnesses among children/students, clients or staff, please report promptly to the CHP's Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770). The CHP will conduct epidemiological investigation and provide advice on necessary prevention and control measures.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop ;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When influenza is prevalent, avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated

public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks in such places; and

- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

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 (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/29/304.html>).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK Chuang', is centered on the page.

(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health