

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (62) in DH CDB/9/12/6/4 Pt.1

4 June, 2020

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

Stay Vigilant against COVID-19 and Update on Local Situation

Further to our letter dated 25 May, we would like to urge you again to maintain vigilance against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) at school after class resumption.

The main mode of transmission of COVID-19 is through respiratory droplets, the virus can also be transmitted through contact. Droplets can land on objects and surfaces around a person such as tables, doorknobs and handrails. People can become infected by touching contaminated objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Of note, some infected persons may be asymptomatic or have mild symptoms only but they could spread the infection.

As of 4 June 2020, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has recorded 1100 cases of COVID-19 in Hong Kong. The situation of COVID-19 outbreak in Hong Kong and the number of confirmed cases have slightly stabilised since late April, but remain very volatile, with local cluster cases reported again recently. The recent cluster affected a total of ten cases of locally-acquired infection involving staff of a warehouse and residents of Lek Yuen Estate in Sha Tin. Investigations are ongoing. This cluster, together with the earlier cluster involving three cases detected in mid-May, signify that there are silent/subclinical local transmissions going on in the community and the risk of community outbreaks exists.

As schools are collective assembly places, infectious diseases such as COVID-19 could be easily spread among people through their daily contacts. Sources of infection could come from staff, students or visitors (especially those having symptoms). Preventive measures against infectious diseases must be heightened in schools so as to minimise the risk of transmission.



To prevent outbreaks of COVID-19 and other respiratory tract infections, it is of prime importance that students or staff with fever (oral temperature

higher than 37.5°C, or ear temperature higher than 38°C), regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school. They should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly. It is also important to measure and record students' body temperature properly.

Schools should actively check the body temperature of all students every day when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever. Staff should also check their temperature before work every day. Students and staff with fever or respiratory illnesses should refrain from school and seek medical attention immediately. This additional measure should continue until further notice by the CHP.

After class resumption, schools are urged to enhance personal and environmental hygiene, as well as take precautionary measures to minimise the risk of spread of COVID-19. Please refer to “Health advice to schools for the prevention of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) after class resumption” (**Appendix**) which is also available at the CHP website (https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/advice_to_school_on_class_resumption_eng.pdf).

I would like to draw your attention to measures on temperature screening, hand hygiene, wearing mask and keeping physical distancing, as well as the parts related to meal arrangement and physical activities, etc. Furthermore, please promulgate the following video clips produced by the CHP on personal and environmental hygiene to students and staff which are available under “Video Demonstration” section of “Infection Control Corner” at the CHP website (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/346/index.html>):

- Washing hands with soap and water
- Properly use of mask
- Procedures for preparing and using diluted bleach
- Handling vomitus
- Handling contaminated linen and clothing

As some people infected with COVID-19 only have mild symptoms, staff and students are advised to seek medical advice promptly when feeling unwell (even if having very mild symptoms only), so that appropriate diagnosis and management can be given at the earliest possible time. Apart from the accident and emergency departments of public hospitals and general outpatient clinics (GOPCs), they may also visit private clinics and hospitals. They can proactively make a request to the doctor for testing when there is any suspicion. The CHP provides free testing of COVID-19 for private doctors.

To prevent respiratory tract infections, staff and students should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before eating, after using the toilet, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. When hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

If you notice an increase in fever/respiratory illnesses among students or staff, please report promptly to the CHP's Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770). If a case of COVID-19 affecting a staff or student is detected, the CHP will carry out epidemiological investigations and contact tracing, and provide advice to the school on the necessary prevention and control measures to be taken, including possible school closure.

For the latest information on COVID-19, please visit the CHP's webpage at <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>. Please draw the attention of the students and staff in your school to the above. Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health



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衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

**Health Advice to Schools
for the Prevention of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
after class resumption
(Interim)**

I. Disease Information

Please visit the following website for information on disease, affected areas and updates related to COVID-19:

<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

The Department of Health advises schools to take the following precautionary measures to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 after class resumption.

II. General Preventive Measures

A. Maintain Good Personal Hygiene

- (a) Perform hand hygiene properly, especially before touching your eyes, nose or mouth; before eating; after using the toilet; and after touching public installations or equipment such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.

- (b) Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated.
- (c) When hands are not visibly soiled, clean hands by rubbing them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative.
- (d) Cover mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands with liquid soap and water afterwards.
- (e) If students/staff have fever or respiratory symptoms, they should refrain from attending class/work at school and seek medical advice promptly.
- (f) Students/staff should wear a surgical mask when taking public transport, staying in crowded places and while in school. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask.
- (g) N95 respirators are generally not recommended for use by general public in community settings as surgical mask can protect against COVID-19 which is mainly transmitted by droplet and contact route. Special training is required for proper wearing and removal of N95 respirator. Otherwise the infective risk due to inadequate protection and contamination may be increased.
- (h) Do not share personal items such as eating utensils and towels.
- (i) Build up good body immunity by having a balanced diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption.
- (j) School should post up health education materials on hand hygiene, cough etiquette and COVID-19 in conspicuous sites to alert staff and students. Relevant health education materials can be downloaded from the CHP website:
<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/464/102466.html>

B. Preparation of Hand Hygiene Facilities

- (a) Provide liquid soap and disposable paper towels at places where there are handwashing facilities, e.g. toilets, kitchens, tuck shops/ canteens, art rooms, activity rooms as indicated.
- (b) Provide 70-80% alcohol-based handrub in places where handwashing facility is not available, e.g. at the school entrance.

C. Maintain Good Indoor Ventilation

- (a) Windows of classroom should be opened.
- (b) Switch on fans or exhaust fans to enhance air flow.
- (c) If the air-conditioning system is used, ensure there is sufficient fresh air supply.
- (d) Keep air-conditioners well maintained. Clean the dust-filters of air-conditioners regularly.

D. Water Dispenser

- (a) Forbid use of drinking fountains during the COVID-19 pandemic because of risk of cross-contamination (e.g. container and mouth inadvertently contacting the nozzle/ protective guard).
- (b) As an alternative, users are advised to use a container (e.g. cup or bottle) to collect water from bottle-filling water dispensers while observing proper personal hygiene.
- (c) Do not use bottle-filling water dispensers to wash hands/ personal items.
- (d) Water dispensers should be regularly cleaned and properly maintained.

E. Maintain Environment Clean and Hygienic

- (a) Maintain good hygienic standard of the school premises through thorough cleaning and disinfection daily (please refer to **Annex I** for procedures of preparing and using diluted bleach). Keep classrooms, library, kitchens, canteens, toilets and bathrooms clean and hygienic by using 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15-30 minutes, and then rinse with water and wipe dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
- (b) Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, furniture, toys, commonly shared items and floor at least twice daily by using 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15-30 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

- (c) If places are contaminated by respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, use strong absorbent disposable paper towels to wipe them away. Then disinfect the surface and the neighbouring area with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15-30 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.
- (d) Ensure waste is removed daily and disposed of safely.

F. Maintain Toilet, Changing Room and Shower Facilities Clean and Hygienic

- (a) Keep toilets clean and dry.
- (b) Clean and disinfect the environment at least daily.
- (c) Cleaning and disinfect the shower cubicles at least every 4 hourly.
- (d) Provide adequate hand washing facilities including liquid soap, disposable paper towels and lidded rubbish bins.
- (e) Ensure the flushing system of the toilets are in proper function at all times.
- (f) Close toilet lids when flushing.
- (g) Pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet once a week.
- (h) Do not alter the drain and pipes without prior authorization.
https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/make_sure_the_trap_is_not_dry.pdf

G. Body Temperature Checking

- (a) School should check temperature for students, staff and visitors upon entry to the school premises. This should be done at all times, i.e. during class suspension, school resumption, and when the school premises are used as examination venue or for any activities.
- (b) Set up a station at the entrance with equipment for temperature check. Refer to **Annex II** for the reference range of body temperature measured by different methods.

- (c) If infrared forehead thermometer is used as the primary means for temperature screening, take reference from the manufacturer for the normal range. The thermometer should be operated according to manufacturer's instruction. It should be noted that infrared forehead thermometer may not provide reliable temperature readings. It is prudent to have a second means (e.g. infrared ear thermometer) for those with doubt on the first reading by infrared forehead thermometer.
- (d) Equip 70-80% alcohol-based handrub and surgical masks at the station in case they are needed.
- (e) Students with fever or respiratory symptoms should not be allowed to attend school. The sick student should wear a surgical mask. Parents or guardians should be informed so that they could bring the student to seek medical advice as soon as possible.
- (f) Staff should also check their temperature before work every day. Those with fever or respiratory symptoms should refrain from work.
- (g) Visitors with fever or respiratory symptoms should not be allowed to enter the school. They are advised to wear a surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly. Consider posting a notice at the entrance to inform people with fever or respiratory symptoms not to enter the school.

III. Precautions After Class Resumption

A. Administrative Measures

- (a) Temperature screening of students, staff and visitors needs to be maintained.
- (b) Wear surgical mask properly while in school premises as far as feasible.
- (c) Perform hand hygiene whenever indicated.
- (d) Consider staggering classes so that students come to school and leave school in batches, for example, in terms of grades. Avoid having large groups of students gathering at the entrances or exits of the school premises.
- (e) Arrange students to use common areas such as library, chapel, music room, computer room, etc. in designated time slots to avoid large groups of students from various grades and classes mixing together.

- (f) Avoid sharing of items such as musical instruments and if require, clean and disinfect between uses.

B. Physical Distancing

- (a) Students should keep at least one metre apart while within the school campus including in classroom, queueing for toilets or at tuck shop.
- (b) Avoid non-essential group activities. Consider using public announcement system where applicable.
- (c) Where group activities are essential, ensure good ventilation of the venue. All attending students and staff should wear a surgical mask. Maintain physical distance at least one metre between students and arrange them to face the same direction if feasible.

C. Meal Arrangement

- (a) Consider stagger meal times to reduce the number of students gathering in lunchrooms.
- (b) Maintain physical distance during meals. Students should face one direction. Otherwise, partitions may be installed on tables. Remind students not to talk while not wearing a surgical mask.

D. Physical Activities

- (a) Outdoor activities are at lower risk compared to indoor activities.
- (b) Activities during which mask can be worn will be at lower risk compared to those cannot.
- (c) Resumption of physical activities should start at small group in a non-contact fashion.
- (d) Large group and contact sports should be only resumed after social distancing has been lifted.
- (e) Games that involves a common object e.g. ball games can be played provided social distancing can be maintained and observation of hand hygiene as appropriate.

- (f) Perform hand hygiene before and after the exercise.
- (g) Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth during exercise. If need to, perform hand hygiene before touching.
- (h) Surgical mask should be worn as far as possible if exercise is not too rigorous.
- (i) Avoid sharing of sports equipment and disinfect after use.
- (j) Avoid overcrowding in changing rooms and shower e.g. using half of the capacity or keeping at least 1.5 m between users.
- (k) No sharing of personal items.
- (l) If students develop fever or respiratory symptoms, stop exercising, wear a surgical mask and seek medical attention as soon as possible.

E. Visitors

- (a) School should check temperature for visitors and deny entry of those with fever or respiratory symptoms.
- (b) All visitors need to wear surgical mask and perform hand hygiene before entering the school premises.
- (c) School should consider cancelling mass gathering events or meetings that take place on school premises.

F. Points to Note when Holding Examinations

- (a) Any student, teacher or staff member who has been outside Hong Kong in the past 14 days should be put under compulsory quarantine for 14 days upon their arrival. They should not enter the school premises.
- (b) Students should be reminded to check body temperature at home and refrain from sitting the examination if they have fever or respiratory symptoms.

Before the examination

- (c) Students should be reminded to wear a surgical mask before coming to the examination venue.
- (d) Provide alcohol-based handrub at the entrance. Students have to perform hand hygiene before entering the venue.
- (e) Ensure good ventilation of the venue.
- (f) Arrange seats so that the distance between students are kept at least one metre.
- (g) Allow adequate staff and ample time to have all candidates screened and seated.
- (h) Remind the students to keep the school premises clean, particularly when using the toilets.

During the examination

- (i) Students and staff should have the surgical mask on during the whole examination.
- (j) Surgical mask should be worn in oral examinations.

After the examination

- (k) Arrange students to leave in batches to avoid over-crowding in exits of halls or classrooms.
- (l) Students should maintain physical distance and continue to wear surgical masks during breaks.
- (m) The examination venue should be thoroughly cleaned after each session.

G. Points to Note for Students or Staff under Quarantine and/ or Medical Surveillance

- (a) Any person under compulsory quarantine for whatever reason should not leave the designated place of quarantine and should not enter the school premises.
- (b) Students or staff under medical surveillance may attend school or work as usual provided all health advices are followed, i.e. checking temperature and observing for symptoms daily.
- (c) Parents or guardians should inform the school if the student is put under quarantine or medical surveillance.
- (d) Students or staff under medical surveillance should wear a surgical mask at all times and report to the school whenever fever or respiratory symptoms develop.

IV. Early Recognition of Symptoms

- (a) Actively check the body temperature of all students every day when they arrive at school so as to identify students with fever. Those with fever or respiratory symptoms should not be allowed to attend school. They should be advised to wear surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly.
- (b) Staff should also check their temperature before work every day, and those with fever or respiratory symptoms should refrain from work.
- (c) Contact the staff and parents or guardians of students to ascertain the reasons for their absence.
- (d) Keep sick leave records of staff and students properly. This helps early detection of possible infections.

V. When a Suspected/ Confirmed Case of COVID-19 is Encountered in School

A. Contact tracing

- (a) If a student or staff member is confirmed to be a case of COVID-19, CHP will conduct contact tracing. Close contacts will be put under quarantine and other contact will be put under medical surveillance. Please refer to Section III(G) for points to note when students or staff are put under quarantine and /or medical surveillance.

B. Enhanced Environmental Disinfection

- (a) Cleansing staff should wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including:
 - Surgical mask
 - Latex gloves
 - Disposable gown
 - Eye protection (goggle/ face shield) and
 - Cap (optional)
- (b) Disinfect all potentially contaminated surfaces or items by using 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15-30 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards.

C. If There is Blood, Secretions, Vomitus or Excreta Spillage, Take Enhanced Measures

- (a) Cleaning staff should wear appropriate PPE including surgical mask, gloves, disposable gown, eye protection (goggles/ face shield) and cap (optional).
- (b) Use forceps to hold the strong absorbent disposable towels to wipe away the blood, secretions, vomitus or excreta during a preliminary clean up.
- (c) Then put the forceps and used absorbent disposable towels in a garbage bag carefully without contaminating oneself/ the environment.

- (d) Disinfect with 1 in 4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 4 parts of water), wipe from the outside inward, leave for 10 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards.
- (e) After the procedure, put all the wastes and cleaning tools (e.g. forceps, cloth, mop head) in the garbage bag.
- (f) Carefully remove PPE, put them in the garbage bag, and then perform hand hygiene.

(When hands are not visibly soiled, use 70-80% alcohol-based handrub. Wash hands with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or visible soiled with blood, body fluid.)

- (g) Wear a pair of new gloves, seal the waste bag tight and dispose it properly in covered rubbish bin. Then, label the rubbish bin and put it in a safe undisturbed place until collection.
- (h) Remove gloves carefully. Wash hands with liquid soap and water.
- (i) When COVID-19 is confirmed, CHP will inform the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to disinfect the contaminated environment and waste disposal.

VI. Guideline on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools

Please refer to the “Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools/ Kindergartens/ Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres/ Child Care Centres” for more details.

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

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The Use of Bleach

Bleach is a strong and effective disinfectant. Its active ingredient, sodium hypochlorite, denatures protein in micro-organisms and is therefore effective in killing bacteria, fungi and viruses. Household bleach works quickly and is widely available at a low cost. Diluted household bleach is thus recommended for the disinfection of environment.

As bleach irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway, decomposes under heat and light and reacts readily with other chemicals, bleach should be used with caution. Improper use of bleach may reduce its effectiveness in disinfection and can injure users. Overuse of bleach will pollute the environment and disturb ecological balance.

Tools and Equipment

Get all necessary tools and equipment ready, such as household bleach, measuring tools, containers and Personal Protective Equipment.

Preparing/ Using Diluted Bleach

- (a) Dilute and use bleach in a well-ventilated area. Put on appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. mask, gloves, safety goggles and plastic apron) when diluting or using bleach as it irritates mucous membranes, the skin and the airway.
- (b) Mix bleach with cold water as hot water decomposes the active ingredient of bleach and renders it ineffective.
- (c) Bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite. Properly dilute the bleach to achieve appropriate concentration as follows:
 - (i) 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 99 parts of water) is used for general household cleaning and disinfection.
 - (ii) 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 49 parts of water) is used for surfaces or articles contaminated with vomitus, excreta and secretions.
 - (iii) 1:4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 4

parts of water) is used for surfaces or articles contaminated with blood spillage.

- (d) Make adjustments to the amount of bleach added if its concentration of sodium hypochlorite is above or below 5.25%.
 - (i) Calculation: Multiplier of the amount of bleach added = $\frac{5.25}{\text{concentration of sodium hypochlorite in bleach}}$
 - (ii) For example, when diluting a bleach containing only 5% sodium hypochlorite, the multiplier is $\frac{5.25}{5}=1.05$. That means $10\text{ml} \times 1.05 = 10.5\text{ml}$ of bleach should be used when preparing a bleach solution.
- (e) Use a tablespoon or measuring cup for accurate measurement of the amount of bleach added.
- (f) Wash hands thoroughly after the procedure.

Precautions for the use of bleach

- (a) Avoid using bleach on metals, wool, nylon, silk, dyed fabric and painted surfaces.
- (b) Avoid touching the eyes. If bleach gets into the eyes, immediately rinse with water for at least 15 minutes and consult a doctor.
- (c) Do not use bleach together with other household detergents as this reduces its effectiveness in disinfection and causes dangerous chemical reactions. For example, a toxic gas is produced when bleach is mixed with acidic detergents such as those used for toilet cleaning. This can result in accidents and injuries. If necessary, use detergents first and rinse thoroughly with water before using bleach for disinfection.
- (d) Undiluted bleach liberates a toxic gas when exposed to sunlight, thus store in a cool, shaded place and out of reach of children.
- (e) Sodium hypochlorite decomposes with time. To ensure its effectiveness, purchase recently produced bleach and avoid over-stocking.
- (f) For effective disinfection, use diluted bleach within 24 hours after preparation as decomposition increases with time if left unused.
- (g) Organic materials inactivate bleach; clean surfaces so that they are clear of organic materials before disinfection with bleach.

Monitoring of Body Temperature

Body temperature varies with age, time of day and level of physical activity. For screening purpose, temperature above the reference range quoted below is considered as significant and one should seek medical attention.

Measuring method	Celsius scale (°C)	Fahrenheit scale (°F)
Oral	37.5	99.5
Tympanic	38	100.4
Armpit	37.3	99.1

Remarks: Read the instructions carefully for the reference range of the readings when using different methods of taking body temperatures.

For details, please refer to the “Guidance Note on Monitoring of Body Temperature” on the CHP website:

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidance_note_on_monitoring_of_body_temperature.pdf