

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (56) in DH CDB/8/82/1

28 August 2026

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge / Teacher,

Stay Vigilant Against Communicable Diseases in the New School Year

As the new school year will commence soon, we would like to take this opportunity to urge you to maintain vigilance against potential spread of communicable diseases in the school setting, in order to safeguard the health of students and staff.

Respiratory infections

Hong Kong has entered the influenza season in late June. The latest surveillance data from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) shows that the local activity of seasonal influenza has still remained at a relatively high level. It is anticipated that influenza activity will remain active at the beginning of the new school year. Separately, the overall activity of COVID-19 has declined after reaching a peak in early August. Meanwhile, the activity of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) has shown a slight upward trend recently, though it still remained below the previous peaks in recent years. As schools are collective assembly places, respiratory infectious diseases such as influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory infections could be easily spread among people through their daily contacts. The CHP expected that following the start of the new school year, an increase in respiratory infection outbreaks may occur in schools. Schools, kindergartens and child care centres should strengthen preventive measures to mitigate the impact of respiratory infections on students and staff.

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications. The CHP appeals to all schools and parents in Hong Kong to actively participate in the 2026/27 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination School Outreach Programme (SIVSOP) and use the newly launched Electronic Consent Form (e-consent form) forms to complete the consent process as early as possible. This allows schools to plan and organise influenza vaccination activities earlier. For schools not participating in the SIVSOP, parents are advised to arrange vaccination for their children at clinics.



To prevent respiratory infections, students and staff members should maintain personal, hand and environmental hygiene at all times. Students or staff members with respiratory symptoms, even if the symptoms are mild, should wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly. They should perform hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask.

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 inform you via another letter.

Mosquito-borne diseases (including chikungunya fever and dengue fever)

Both temperature and rainfall remain at high levels during the summer, leading to a continuous risk of the spread of various mosquito-borne diseases in Hong Kong. The *Aedes albopictus* mosquito, which can transmit the chikungunya virus, dengue virus, and Zika virus, is very common in Hong Kong. Mosquito-borne diseases are not transmitted between individuals; however, the blood of infected patients during the initial phase of the illness (particularly during fever stage) has a high viral load, making them contagious to mosquitoes. If a mosquito bites an infected individual while they are infectious, the mosquito-borne disease might be further spread to other people locally via mosquitoes.

Chikungunya fever (CF) is caused by the chikungunya virus. The disease is characterised by fever and debilitating joint pain. As of 27 August, the CHP recorded two CF cases this year, both were imported cases.

Dengue fever (DF) is an acute febrile viral illness with symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, rash, muscle and joint pain. The symptoms of first infection are usually mild, but subsequent infections with dengue virus of other serotypes are more likely to result in severe dengue which may progress to circulatory failure, shock and even death. As of 27 August, the CHP recorded 28 DF cases this year, including 2 local and 26 imported cases.

As mosquito-borne diseases such as CF and DF are endemic in various countries worldwide, the risk of importation persists. There is also a possibility that imported cases may lead to local transmission. Therefore, we would like to seek your help to prevent mosquito-borne diseases by taking anti-mosquito measures, and urging students and staff to adopt personal protective measures.

School should take the following preventive measures to prevent accumulation of stagnant water and eliminate mosquito breeding sites:

- Put all used cans and bottles into covered dustbins
- Change water for plants at least once a week, avoid using saucers underneath flower pots
- Cover all water containers, wells and water storage tanks tightly
- Keep all drains free from blockage
- Top up all defective ground surfaces to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water

Furthermore, the school management is advised to appoint designated staff for mosquito prevention and control in the school premises. Details are available from the guidelines published by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department:

https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/library/pdf_pest_control/mosquito_school.pdf.

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD)

HFMD is a common disease in children usually caused by enteroviruses such as coxsackie viruses and enterovirus 71 (EV71). In Hong Kong, the peak season for HFMD is usually from May to July and another peak may also occur from October to December in the new school year. This year, surveillance indicators for HFMD activity increased to high level between June and July and then decreased in mid-August.

HFMD is mainly transmitted by contact with an infected person's nose or throat discharges, saliva, fluid from broken vesicles or stool, or after touching contaminated objects. As the viruses can easily spread through close person-to-person contact among students and the activity of HFMD is generally higher between October and December every year, schools need to be cautious that outbreaks of HFMD will occur after the start of the new school year.

Maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene is the most important measure to prevent HFMD, including performing hand hygiene frequently and washing hands with liquid soap and water, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys and shared items, etc. To prevent the spread of HFMD within school settings, affected children should remain at home and refrain from attending school until they have completely recovered.

Other matters to note

To prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases, students / staff members who

develop fever, acute respiratory symptoms, diarrhea, vomiting and rash etc. should not attend school and should seek medical advice as soon as possible. Besides, schools should take measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, e.g., remind students / 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” at:

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_are_centres.pdf

In addition, schools should set up a mechanism for collecting personal particulars and contact information of students 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 the CHP and other relevant departments for disease control purpose when necessary.

If you suspect any outbreaks occurring in your institution, please report to the Central Notification Office of the CHP (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770; Email: diseases@dh.gov.hk) as early as possible for prompt epidemiological investigations and appropriate control measures.

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

- Seasonal influenza
(<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/14843.html>)
- Chikungunya fever
(<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/109029.html>)
- Dengue fever
(<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/38847.html>)
- HFMD and EV71 infection
(<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/16354.html>)

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. Albert AU)

For Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health