



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

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24 January 2020

To: Supervisors/Principals of All Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

Measures on the Prevention of Novel Coronavirus in Schools

In light of the latest situation of the novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection in Wuhan of Hubei Province and the Winter Influenza, we are concerned about the health of teachers and students. Since 3 January this year, we have disseminated nine letters of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) to schools, urging schools to heighten vigilance and strengthen preventive measures, and disseminate the related information to parents and enlist their cooperation to upkeep students' personal and environmental hygiene. Children with fever or respiratory symptoms should wear a surgical mask, promptly seek medical advice, and refrain from attending class at school. 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.: 24772770; 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.

The Education Bureau (EDB) also reminded teachers and students on January 23 that they should avoid unnecessary travel to Wuhan of Hubei Province. If it is unavoidable to travel to Wuhan, they should put on a surgical mask and continue to do

so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong. As for student exchange programmes on other cities of the Mainland, we understand that parents are concerned about the well-being of students amid the development of the epidemic outbreak. Schools may consider postponing the activities organized by the EDB or other organizations.

During the Chinese New Year holidays, teachers and students should strengthen the preventive measures to prevent infection. At the same time, schools should clean their premises thoroughly to prepare for class resumption after the Chinese New Year holidays. CHP has provided relevant guidelines, for details, please refer to:

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

In gist, teachers and students should adopt the following measures:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion 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 or hand dryer. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, 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.
- 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 feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if having fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once.
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of recent travel history and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene.
- Schools should check the body temperature of students upon their arrival in order to identify students having fever. School staff should also measure their body temperature before going to work.

- Schools should maintain the environmental hygiene and clean their premises thoroughly during holidays.

The EDB is actively discussing with various stakeholders about implementation of the control measures, including consideration of extending schools' Chinese New Year holidays to minimize the risk of infection and ensure students' health. We would also consider the impacts of these measures and cater for the needs of students and parents. We will continue to keep in close contact with the Department of Health to understand the latest situation and take into account their professional views in considering the proper measures to ensure students' health. We will also disseminate the latest information and related preventive measures to schools.

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

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Cynthia CHAN)
for Secretary for Education