



# 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

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30 November 2020

To: Supervisors / Principals of All Secondary Schools, Primary Schools, Special Schools, Schools offering Non-Local Curriculum, Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres and Private Schools offering Non-Formal Curriculum

Dear Supervisor / Principal,

## **Arrangements of Suspension of Face-to-face Classes for All Schools**

Further to the Government's earlier separate announcements on suspension of face-to-face classes and school activities for all kindergartens and Primary 1 to Primary 3 levels of primary schools until December 6, the Government announced yesterday (29 November) that in light of the worsening situation of the COVID-19 epidemic, all kindergartens as well as primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum) would suspend face-to-face classes and school activities starting from 2 December (Wednesday) this year until the beginning of school Christmas holidays. Private schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") will suspend face-to-face classes for all classes for two weeks until 15 December.

## **Studying and Examinations Arrangements**

We understand that the sector and parents are deeply concerned about the arrangements of the primary school internal assessment for the purpose of Secondary School Places Allocation, and that Secondary 6 students have to face public examinations soon. Schools can consider arranging Primary 6 students to return to schools on a need basis to take the internal assessment for the purpose of Secondary School Places Allocation, and arranging Secondary 6 classes or classes participating in this academic year's overseas public examinations to return to schools to attend lessons to prepare for the examinations or take internal examinations at schools. The examinations or face-to-face classes should be

conducted on a half-day basis. The upper limit for students to return to a school for face-to-face classes or examinations should be capped at one sixth of the school's maximum permitted capacity.

Schools must strictly adhere to all the related health protection measures, including requiring all personnel to wear masks within the school premises, maintaining appropriate social distances, checking of body temperatures of students and teachers upon entry into the school premises, in order to safeguard the health and well-being of students and teachers. We urge schools to strictly adhere to the guidelines "Health Protection Measures for Schools" issued by the Education Bureau (EDB) and "Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of COVID-19" issued by the Centre of Health Protection (CHP). In view of the worsening situation of the epidemic, schools are requested not to arrange activities which require students to take off their masks. If students cannot wear masks due to own physical conditions or other reasons, schools can adopt other preventive measures, such as requiring the students to wear face shields or "anti-droplet hats with face shields" to safeguard the personal hygiene of students. When schools are conducting examinations as aforementioned, they should take appropriate precautionary anti-epidemic measures, including keeping appropriate distances among seats, ensuring that all students wear face masks, checking of body temperatures, and avoiding crowd gatherings. Schools can make reference to the epidemic prevention guidelines issued by the CHP as well as adhere to the guidelines for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE), issued by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). The relevant website is as follows: (<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/MainNews/Instructions to Candidates Precautionary Measures at Exam Centre Eng .pdf>)

If parents have concern over examination and face-to-face class arrangements, they may consider keeping their children at home. Schools are advised to be flexible in handling students' leave applications or absence.

### **Administrative Arrangements for Suspending Face-to-face Classes**

Except for the above-mentioned situations where students can return to schools, face-to-face classes and school activities must be suspended for all schools. During this period, schools should make the following administrative arrangements:

- (i) Schools and boarding sections (if applicable) should remain open to take care of those students who have to go back to schools or boarding sections (if applicable) because of the lack of carers at home, and schools should maintain adequate social distances amongst students. Schools should arrange staff to be on duty to handle school affairs, answer parents' enquiries and take care of those students who have returned to schools. Schools should ensure that adequate and appropriate

manpower is made available. Teaching staff going back to schools should maintain social distancing and put in place all the preventive measures. If more than one student is back to school, then the school should ensure the maintenance of appropriate social distance;

- (ii) Schools should maintain social distancing and avoid crowd gatherings. Schools should not organise mass events such as parents' days, open days, admission interviews, campus visits, or speech days in the recent period. If schools are to convene meetings, they should hold online conferences/teleconferences in lieu of face-to-face meetings;
- (iii) Schools can adopt other modes to facilitate children to continue learning at home and help them sustain their curiosity and motivation for learning. On this, the EDB reminds schools and parents not to allow children's prolonged use of digital screen gadgets. Children should be given appropriate rest for their eyes when using these gadgets. Hence, as a matter of principle, e-learning in the form of real-time online teaching is not suitable for kindergartens. The EDB issued a letter<sup>1</sup> to all kindergartens on 10 May this year disseminating certain principles and strategies in supporting kindergarten students to learn at home for schools' reference;
- (iv) Schools should activate the established school-based contingency plans (refer to EDBC No. 9/2015 for details), adopt contingency measures during the suspension of face-to-face classes and make respective arrangements (including adjustments to activities inside and outside schools, school bus services, etc.), and should keep close contact with the parents, etc;
- (v) Parents should take precautionary measures for COVID-19 and influenza as well as pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. They should avoid bringing their children to crowded places with poor ventilation. Students should maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and take adequate rest in order to strengthen their immunity; and
- (vi) If school staff or students are feeling unwell (even the symptoms are very mild), they must not return to school and should seek medical advice promptly to receive appropriate diagnoses and treatments.

Schools should ensure the environmental hygiene of the school premises. The EDB urges all schools to strictly observe the instructions from the Department of Health as well as

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/about-preprimary-kindergarten/KG%20Letter%20and%20Annex\\_E\\_20200511\\_Final.pdf](https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/about-preprimary-kindergarten/KG%20Letter%20and%20Annex_E_20200511_Final.pdf)

the guidelines issued earlier by the EDB and put in place all the health protection measures. In this regard, please maintain close contact with the respective Senior School Development Officers / Senior Services Officers (Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verena', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

(Dr Verena LAU)  
for Secretary for Education