



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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4 January 2021

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,

**Continuation of Suspension of Face-to-Face Classes for Schools in Hong Kong:
The Arrangements**

Since the situation of COVID-19 is still severe, the Government has decided to maintain the existing social distancing measures until 20 January 2021. Schools will dovetail with the arrangements, and the Education Bureau (EDB) has decided that all kindergartens, primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum) as well as schools offering non-formal curriculum (PSNFCs) (commonly known as “tutorial schools”) will continue the suspension of face-to-face classes and school activities after 10 January 2021. The suspension will continue until the beginning of schools’ Chinese New Year holidays.

Studying and Examination Arrangements

We understand that the learning of students will inevitably be affected as they cannot return to schools for a prolonged period, and we are also mindful that schools are keen to sustain certain face-to-face class time with students. With such considerations, provided that proper health protection measures are in place, we will continue to allow schools to arrange a small number of students to return to campuses to attend face-to-face classes in accordance with school-based arrangements. Under prevailing arrangements, S.6 students can return to school for on campus learning, while P.6 students can return to school to take examinations. The new arrangements will further allow schools to extend the related measures to students of other levels in a more flexible manner:

- (i) Secondary schools can arrange students of any individual level (including Secondary 1 to Secondary 6) to return to schools (either in the morning or in the afternoon) to attend face-to-face classes or take examinations. Schools can arrange two half-day sessions of lessons on each day. The upper population limit of students to return to a school for each half-day session should be capped at one sixth of the school's maximum permitted capacity. In order to avoid students eating out, schools cannot arrange the same class level of students to attend face-to-face classes or take examinations for an entire day. In other words, students attending morning session and afternoon session must be from different levels;
- (ii) Primary schools can arrange students of any individual level (including Primary 1 to Primary 6) to return to schools in the morning to attend half-day face-to-face classes or take examinations. We do not recommend schools to arrange any learning or other activities for students of any level for the rest of the day. The upper population limit of students to return to a school each day should be capped at one sixth of the school's maximum permitted capacity;
- (iii) Kindergartens (KGs) will continue to suspend face-to-face classes. We encourage KGs to continue to deploy diversified teaching and learning modes, and design activities that are suitable for home learning, so as to help maintain children's learning motivation and curiosity. The EDB issued a letter¹ to all KGs on 10 May last year sharing principles and strategies in supporting KG students to learn at home. Schools may make reference to the letter;
- (iv) Special schools, in principle, can make reference to the arrangements of ordinary schools. The diverse needs and situations of individual students will be taken into account in deciding the detailed arrangements;
- (v) For PSNFCs, they can arrange a small number of students to return to schools to attend face-to-face classes for not more than a half day. The upper population limit of students to return to a school for face-to-face classes at the same time slot should be capped at one sixth of the school's maximum permitted capacity.

Regarding the interview arrangements for Secondary 1 (S1) Discretionary Places (DP), schools could, if affected by the epidemic, decide whether the original S1 DP selection arrangements should be maintained by making reference to the actual circumstances of the schools. Should there be any amendments to the related arrangements, agreement must be sought from the School Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee in advance, and the parents of students concerned should be notified as soon as possible. The selection procedures adopted should be based on the principles of fairness, impartiality and openness. If interviews could not be conducted in light of the development of the epidemic, schools might adopt other selection methods, for instance, drawing reference from students' past academic

¹ https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/about-preprimary-kindergarten/KG%20Letter%20and%20Annex_E_20200511_Final.pdf

performance or records on extra-curricular activities.

Administrative Arrangements during Suspension of Face-to-face Classes

During this period, schools should implement 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, 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; and
- (iii) 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.

Targeted Group Testing Scheme of COVID-19 (for Teaching and Non-teaching Staff and Staff of Boarding Section) (the Scheme)

Starting from 11 January 2021, we will continue the Scheme and arrange tests for the remaining school staff by batches. For the detailed logistical arrangements for individual schools, including the dates of distribution of testing kits and collection of deep throat saliva specimen bottles, we will issue letters to the schools concerned separately. To safeguard the health of individuals, students and other teaching staff, and to minimise the risk of transmission in schools and the community, we strongly appeal to schools to join hands with us and encourage all teachers and staff of boarding sections to actively participate in the COVID-19 testing under the Scheme.

The EDB would take the opportunity to thank school staff, parents and students for the relentless efforts they have devoted in preventing and fighting the epidemic. Schools have been putting in place all the necessary measures to dovetail

with the Government's anti-epidemic arrangements, coping with the changes flexibly and adeptly, to join hand with the society in the fighting COVID-19. The EDB will continue to closely monitor the epidemic's development, take into account professional advice from health experts as well as maintain dialogues with the school sector, in order to review the aforementioned arrangements and relevant measures in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,

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

(Dr Verena LAU)
for Secretary for Education