



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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傳真 Fax Line :

5 February 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,

Class Arrangements for Schools after Chinese New Year Holidays

Further to the announcement on 4 January this year regarding the continuation of suspension of face-to-face classes and school activities for all kindergartens (KGs), primary schools and secondary schools in Hong Kong until the beginning of schools' Chinese New Year holidays, the Education Bureau (EDB) announces the detailed arrangements for resumption of face-to-face classes of KGs, primary schools and secondary schools after the Chinese New Year holidays.

The objective of the EDB has been to progressively increase the time for face-to-face classes in a gradual and orderly manner, taking into account the development of the epidemic. We understand that students' prolonged absence from schools will inevitably affect their learning, and also have an adverse effect on their physical and psychosocial developments. Hence, we strive to strike a balance between meeting the learning needs of students and preventing and fighting the epidemic. We, together with parents, teachers and students, share the common objective to fight the epidemic together with the community, curb the disease as early as possible, and allow students to return to schools safely and fully resume face-to-face classes.

Overall Face-to-Face Class Arrangements

The EDB, after taking into account the latest development of the epidemic, advice of health experts and the preparedness of schools, has decided that all KGs, primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum) as well as schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as 'tutorial schools') (PSNFCs) should be allowed to arrange more students to return to campuses on a half-day basis in accordance with school-based circumstances after the schools' Chinese New Year's holidays, with the number of students capped at one-third of the total number of students of the schools. The related class arrangements are as follows:

- (i) secondary schools can arrange students of any individual level (including Secondary 1 to Secondary 6) to return to schools to attend no more than half-day (either in the morning or in the afternoon) face-to-face classes or take examinations. The upper population limit of students to return to a school for each session should be capped at one third of the school's total number of students. To minimise the infection risk caused by 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 and afternoon sessions must be from different class 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 no more than half-day face-to-face classes or take examinations. Schools should not arrange 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 session should be capped at one third of the school's total number of students;
- (iii) for KGs, morning and whole-day sessions of the KG can arrange students of any individual level to return to schools in the morning to attend no more than half-day face-to-face classes. For afternoon sessions, they can arrange students of any individual level to return to the schools in the afternoon to attend no more than half-day face-to-face classes. KGs should not arrange learning or other activities for the same batch of students for rest of the day. The upper population limit of students to return to school for each session should be capped at one third of the total number of students of each session (that is, the number of students attending classes in the morning should be capped at one-third of the total number of students of the morning/whole-day sessions; whereas the number of students attending classes in the afternoon should be capped at one-third of the total number of students of the afternoon session);
- (iv) special schools should, in principle, 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; and

- (v) for PSNFCs, they can arrange some 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 third of the school's maximum permitted capacity.

The EDB will continuously monitor the development of the epidemic, take into account health experts' advice, and maintain liaison with the school sector. When the epidemic situation stabilises, we will consider further relaxation of the face-to-face class arrangements.

Further Option for Individual Schools

That said, up to now, the epidemic situation has still been fluctuating. Among the confirmed cases each day, there are many with unknown sources. It is believed that full-scale class resumption cannot be made possible in the short run. During this period, we should, through reasonable and practicable means, create a safer environment for students to learn and, as far as possible, allow them more time to study on campus. The EDB has earlier implemented the COVID-19 Targeted Group Testing Scheme. Some schools have participated actively with all teachers and staff completed the tests. In addition, we understand that some schools have, out of their own initiatives, arranged teachers and staff for regular testing to protect the safety of teachers and students. As a matter of fact, health experts also consider that apart from the prevailing anti-epidemic measures being implemented by schools, virus testing is also a key to epidemic prevention and control. In the light of the above, the EDB is of the view that if an individual school can arrange all of its teachers and staff to take regular virus test, there will be extra protection for students and teachers and a safer learning environment for students. The EDB will, take into account the actual circumstances of such schools, consider allowing them to arrange whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes. Schools which are interested in the arrangement should read the Annex for details.

On-campus Health Measures

We ask schools to continue to put in place the preventive measures stipulated in "Health Protection Measures for Schools" issued by the EDB and "Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of COVID-19" issued by the Centre for Health Protection. Such measures include wearing masks all the time within school campuses, maintaining appropriate social distances, measuring temperatures of teachers and students at school entrances, etc. They are to safeguard the health of the teachers and students. Schools should also always keep the school environment clean and hygienic.

Activity Arrangements during Chinese New Year Holidays

The EDB strongly advises that teachers, staff and students should avoid going out, having crowd gatherings and social contacts as well as dining out during the Chinese New Year holidays. Given that the epidemic situation of COVID-19 remains

severe around the world, teachers, staff and students should avoid all non-essential trips outside Hong Kong. In this connection, we remind schools that they should explain their school-based arrangements regarding overseas trips during the school's Chinese New Year holidays to their teachers and staff (including the situation if a teacher or staff member is unable to return to Hong Kong to perform duties after the scheduled Chinese New Year holidays). Such arrangements should be in compliance with the Education Ordinance, Education Regulation, Employment Ordinance as well as provisions and procedures set out in the Codes of Aid and guidelines issued by the EDB.

Contracts with Service Providers

Various industries in the society have been affected by the epidemic. During the period of suspension of face-to-face class and school activities services of tuck shops/canteens, lunch box suppliers, school bus services were not able to operate as usual. All along, schools have been adhering to the principles and procedures stipulated in the relevant circulars issued by the EDB when they draw up agreements with the service providers that include the terms for the services provided, charges and all associated arrangements. The epidemic has severely affected the operation of the service providers for a prolonged period. As such, schools can take such special circumstances into account, and principals can negotiate with the service providers and provide rental concession to tuck shops/canteens (if any) by revising the service agreements. In addition, if circumstances allow, schools can consider negotiating with the lunch box suppliers/school bus operators to extend their contracts (if such contracts are going to expire by the end of this school year) up to the end of August 2022. That said, the relevant stakeholders should be consulted. Schools should also obtain prior approval from the IMCs/EDB (applicable to schools with SMCs), and keep the records properly (such as the reasons and factors that have been considered, the terms negotiated with the service providers, etc.).

Administrative Arrangements

Schools should put in place the following administrative arrangements before the full resumption of face-to-face classes and school activities:

- (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 on campus. 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. Teachers and staff going back to schools should maintain adequate social distances and put in place all preventive measures. If more than one student has returned to a school, then the school should ensure the maintenance of appropriate social distances;
- (ii) In order to minimise social contact and avoid crowd gatherings, schools at this stage should not organise mass events such as parents' days, open days,

campus visits, or speech days. If schools have 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 and make respective arrangements (including adjustments to activities inside and outside schools, school bus services, etc.) before full resumption of face-to-face classes and school activities, and should keep close contact with the parents, etc.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verena LAU', with a large, sweeping initial 'V'.

(Dr Verena LAU)
for Secretary for Education

Further Option for Resumption of Face-to-Face Classes for Individual Schools

If an individual school can arrange all its teachers and staff to take regular virus tests, there will be extra protection for students and teachers and a safer learning environment will be created for students. The Education Bureau (EDB) will, taking into account the actual circumstances of such schools, allow them to arrange whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes. A participating school is required to put in place the following arrangements:

- (i) the school (including kindergarten) should draw up a target date for whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes, and arrange all its teachers and staff (i.e. teaching and non-teaching staff directly employed by the school working on campus) to undergo and complete the tests within 14 days before the target date of whole-school class resumption;
- (ii) the schools should commit to arrange all teachers and staff to undergo regular virus tests after the commencement of whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes. The tests should be conducted and completed once in every 14-day cycle;
- (iii) with the endorsement of the Incorporated Management Committee /School Management Committee /KG Operator, the school should duly complete the appended form and notify the EDB of the class resumption arrangements at least three working days in advance before the target date. The EDB will, under normal circumstances, issue the reply slip within two working days. The school should inform parents, students and related stakeholders of its plan as early as possible so that they can make advance preparations;
- (iv) if the school cannot make timely testing arrangements within any of the 14-day cycle (as mentioned in item (ii) above), it should inform the EDB. The Bureau will consider the case, and may require the school, after a certain period of time, to revert to the face-to-face class arrangements of the other schools which do not conduct regular testing. In making the decision, the Bureau will allow the school time to inform the parents early and make appropriate administrative arrangements;
- (v) teachers and staff of the school should retain the negative testing results (for example, Short Message Service (SMS) in mobile phones or laboratory testing reports) and present the related proof to the school. The school should keep a record of the negative testing results of all teachers and staff;
- (vi) the Government has been offering multiple locations and modes to facilitate virus testing, including the 19 Community Testing Centres across districts, and free-of-charge specimen collection packs available from 47 General Out-patient Clinics, 121 post offices and 20 major MTR stations. Testing results will be made available within a short period of time. Teachers and staff may refer to the following website for the various available avenues for virus testing (<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html>). The EDB will help schools that require assistance as far as possible; and
- (vii) the whole-school resumption of face-to-face classes is on half-day basis. The school should thoroughly clean and sanitize its premises during non-school hours. The school should also put in place related support measures. For example, the school should request, apart from teachers and staff as mentioned in item (i) above, other personnel who have to regularly visit and stay at the school premises to strictly observe the health precautionary measures and maintain appropriate social distancing. The EDB also encourages such personnel to actively conduct virus tests.

**Further Option for Resumption of
Face-to-Face Classes for Individual Schools**

To: _____ District School Development Section / Joint Office for Kindergartens
and Child Care Centres
[Fax no. : _____]

In accordance with the letter issued by the Education Bureau (EDB) on 5 February 2021, we hereby certify that all teachers and staff have undergone COVID-19 tests during the period between _____ (day) _____ (month) 2021 and _____ (day) _____ (month) 2021 (i.e., within 14 days before the target date for full resumption of half-day face-to-face classes) and obtained negative testing results. Thereafter, all teachers and staff will undergo and complete virus tests regularly (once in every 14-day cycle). If arrangements could not be made timely, our school will notify the EDB.

With the endorsement of our Incorporated Management Committee (IMC)/School Management Committee (SMC)/KG Operator, our school plans to start full resumption of half-day face-to-face classes from _____ (day) _____ (month) 2021 (_____) (day of the week (e.g. Mon)) in accordance with the requirements set out in the letter issued by the EDB on 5 February 2021. We have strictly observed the relevant health guidelines and put in place all necessary health protection measures to keep the school environment clean and hygienic. We have also been keeping parents and other stakeholders informed of the related arrangements.

All the contents of this document are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

School Name:	School Chop (if any)
Name of Supervisor / Principal (in BLOCK letters):	
Signature of Supervisor / Principal:	
Date:	
Fax No.:	

===== Reply Slip (For completion by the EDB) =====

**Further Option for Resumption of
Face-to-Face Classes for Individual Schools**

Dear Supervisor / Principal,

This is to acknowledge that the EDB has received your notification about the full resumption of face-to-face classes on a half-day basis on the above-mentioned date.

[_____] District School Development Section/ Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres
Name of School Development Officer / Services Officer (in BLOCK letters):
Signature of School Development Officer / Services Officer:
Date: