



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

電話 Telephone :

來函檔號 Your Ref. :

傳真 Fax Line :

30 August 2022

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,

**Strengthening Health Precautionary Measures for the New School Year
Launching the “School Vaccination Commendation Scheme”**

The 2022/23 school year will soon start. In view of the recent upsurge of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong, the Education Bureau (EDB) reminds schools to stay vigilant and strictly put in place adequate anti-epidemic measures to prepare for the new school year.

Strengthening Anti-epidemic Measures

School Environmental and Personal Hygiene

Schools should thoroughly clean and sanitise school premises (including classrooms, special rooms, toilets and tuck shops) and boarding sections (if applicable), and inspect partitions to ensure that they are properly installed in classrooms, canteens, etc. before the start of the new school year. Teachers and school staff as well as students within the school premises must wear well-fitted surgical masks at all times to minimise the risk of virus transmission, maintain appropriate social distances, and avoid crowd gathering¹ and dining in groups. Schools must remind parents to ensure students to check their body temperature and undergo rapid antigen test (RAT) each day before returning to school. In order to identify early confirmed cases, the EDB urges schools to encourage their teachers, school staff and students to undergo daily RAT two days in advance before the start of the school year (i.e. 30 and 31 August 2022). Those teachers and school staff and students

¹ Teachers and school staff should avoid participating in mask-off and other high-risk activities. This is to prevent face-to-face classes from being affected due to a high number of teachers and school staff being infected or becoming close contact cases.

with fever, respiratory symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 by RAT should not return to school for work/study.

“Vaccine Pass”

The EDB earlier announced that except for exempted persons, all teaching and non-teaching staff, persons providing on-campus services, as well as visitors of all kindergartens / kindergartens-cum-child care centers (hereafter referred to as “kindergartens” (KGs)), primary and secondary schools (including special schools and their boarding section, schools offering non-local curriculum), and schools offering non-formal curriculum (PSNFCs, commonly known as “tutorial schools”), must fulfill the “Vaccine Pass” requirements when entering school premises. The Government has also earlier announced that the “Vaccine Pass” function would be strengthened and the quarantine arrangements for those persons arriving in Hong Kong would be adjusted. The EDB has revised the anti-epidemic arrangements for schools, including the newly introduced measures to be taken by schools for persons with “Red Code” and “Amber Code”. Schools should remind teachers and school staff and students to report proactively their “Red Code” and “Amber Code” status. If they are with a “Red Code”, they must not return to school to work or study; if they are with an “Amber Code”, they may return to school to work or study after obtaining a negative RAT result on each day. Schools have the responsibility to proactively check all the visitors to ensure that they are not holding a “Red Code” or “Amber Code”.

School Ventilation Facilities

The EDB upon consultation with the Centre for Health Protection of Department of Health (DH) has updated the guidelines “Health Protection Measures for Schools” and uploaded it to the EDB webpage. In addition, the EDB has all along been urging schools to actively follow up on ventilation facilities requirements and necessary improvement measures, such as installation of air purifiers. The DH has devised the guidelines titled “A Supplement on Ventilation” for schools and all schools should take note and comply with the relevant stipulations. For details, please refer to the website:

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

Whole-day Resumption of Face-to-face Classes for Secondary Schools

The EDB issued a letter to schools on 5 August 2022 informing them of the detailed arrangements for resuming face-to-face classes in the 2022/23 school year. In order to further strengthen the protective barrier of schools, the EDB has decided to step up the vaccination requirements starting from 1 November 2022. If individual schools (including secondary sections of special schools) plan to resume face-to-face classes for the whole school or individual class levels on or after 1 November 2022, students who have received three doses of vaccine (excluding those who have received two doses of vaccine

but are still within the time interval waiting for the third dose², or those students aged 5 to 11 who are required to receive only two doses of BioNTech vaccine, or those students who had prior COVID-19 infection and are not required to receive the third dose of vaccine³) must reach 90% or above of the whole school or an individual class level. The EDB, taking into account the actual circumstances of the schools, may allow them to resume whole-day face-to-face classes. If the new condition cannot be fulfilled, schools will have to revert to half-day face-to-face classes starting from the aforesaid date. Schools should adequately communicate with relevant stakeholders (including parents, etc.) and inform them of the related arrangements as early as possible. Schools planning to continue or to resume whole-day face-to-face classes for the whole school or individual class levels on or after 1 November 2022 should complete the Annex.

Students who are unfit for vaccination with medical proofs, students who have previously been infected with COVID-19 which render them unable to be vaccinated, and those who are not in Hong Kong will not be counted towards the total number of student population eligible to receive vaccination.

Primary school and KG students are younger and have lower self-care abilities. In addition, the vaccination rate for students aged between 3 and 11 is still relatively low. Hence, primary schools and KGs will not have arrangements for whole-day face-to-face classes for the time being.

Schools offering non-local curriculum can take into account the situation of schools and the needs of students to make flexible arrangements. PSNFCs should continue the arrangements for half-day face-to-face classes and the abovementioned whole-day class arrangements for secondary schools are not applicable to these schools.

Arrangements for Extra-curricular Activities for Individual Students

Currently for individual students who have received two doses of vaccine for more than 14 days, schools may arrange these students to stay at school after lessons or the other half-day for non-academic extra-curricular activities (e.g. music and sports activities, school team training, etc.). These students may also participate in some mask off activities (e.g. playing woodwind instruments, “contact” sports such as football and basketball, etc.) at school (including both in-class and after-class activities).

² Students having received two doses of vaccine on or before 1 October 2022 who are still within the time interval waiting to receive the third dose of vaccine will be regarded as meeting the respective vaccination requirements. Such students are allowed to: (a) attend whole-day classes; (b) return to school on the other half-day for any reasons; (c) take part in mask-off activities (including luncheon); (d) reside in the boarding sections; (e) be counted as a valid entry in the commendation scheme. These students should take the third dose of vaccine within 1 week after they are eligible to do so. Otherwise, they cannot participate in the above activities/be counted into the total number of students having completed vaccination.

³ Generally speaking, a person who has been infected with COVID-19 requires one less dose of COVID-19 vaccine than others. For details of the recommendations from the 2019 COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, please refer to the website:

<https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/recommendedDoses>

To further strengthen the protective barrier of schools, starting from 1 October 2022, the related requirements will be stepped up. Students will be required to have received three doses of vaccine. The above arrangements are not applicable to students aged 5 to 11 years who are required to receive only two doses of BioNTech vaccine, and students with prior COVID-19 infection who are not required to take the third dose of vaccine. Students who have received two doses of vaccine but are still within the time interval waiting to receive the third dose² should, by following the CHP's recommendation, receive the third dose of vaccine within one week upon their being eligible to do so.

Students with Needs for Care

Students (including boarders) receiving care services must have received three doses of vaccine on or before 1 October 2022 (excluding those who have received two doses of vaccine but are still within the time interval waiting to receive the third dose², students aged 5 to 11 years who are required to receive only two doses of BioNTech vaccine, and students with prior COVID-19 infection who are not required to take the third dose of vaccine). Starting from 17 October 2022, KG students aged 3 years or below should have received two doses of vaccine for more than 14 days, and they should receive the third dose timely according to the recommended schedule.

Understanding the General Situation of School Vaccination

In order to understand the general situation of vaccination in schools, and to formulate appropriate measures to beef up the promotion of vaccination so that students can obtain more comprehensive and effective protection as soon as possible, we will collect the vaccination rates of teaching and non-teaching staff⁴ directly employed by the schools and also students through monthly online questionnaires starting from September in the 2022/23 school year.

Schools may, during the period from 1 September 2022 to 7 September 2022, use the school administrator account designated for the EDB "e-Services Portal" or "Common Log-On System" to login the "Common Log-On System" (website: <https://esurveyweb.edb.gov.hk>), download the excel file titled "**An Overview of School Vaccination Rates**" and complete the questionnaire. Schools should provide the data of all staff directly employed by schools (including non-teaching staff) as well as students regarding their vaccination status as at 1 September 2022. Schools should submit the completed excel file on or before 7 September 2022. Please note that the EDB will no longer accept any paper submission of this questionnaire.

⁴ Teaching staff include principals, teachers and teaching assistants. Non-teaching staff include school executive officers, assistant clerical officers/ clerical assistants, janitors, cooks, school bus drivers, school light bus drivers and escorts (commonly known as nannies), laboratory technicians, braille staff, teacher assistants, workshop attendants, artisans, social workers, educational psychologists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, nurses, wardens, the related grades of boarding section staff such as social work officers, social work assistants, welfare workers. Persons providing on-campus services include, for example, group instructors. Persons who frequently visit school campuses include, for example, volunteers.

If schools have not opened the above-mentioned administrator accounts or if they have other enquiries related to account registration, please call the support hotline of “e-Services Portal” at 3698 3640 or email to eservices@edb.gov.hk for enquiries.

We encourage teachers and school staff and students to “get fully vaccinated early” and also encourage schools to proactively reach out to students who have not yet been vaccinated or who have not received appropriate doses of vaccine according to the latest government recommendations. Schools should understand their concerns and difficulties, and advise and assist them to get vaccinated as soon as possible. If schools have any questions about the contents of the questionnaire, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officer or Senior Service Officer.

School Vaccination Commendation Scheme

The EDB will launch the School Vaccination Commendation Scheme (“Commendation Scheme”) to give recognition to those school that are proactive in encouraging students and parents to get vaccinated and with high vaccination rates of students. At the same time, the Commendation Scheme also aims to motivate other schools with relatively low vaccination rates to make further efforts to encourage parents and students to receive vaccination. The Commendation Scheme covers all secondary schools, primary schools, special schools, private schools offering non-local curriculum and KGs in Hong Kong.

Under the Commendation Scheme, if the vaccination rates of students in a school having received three doses of vaccine (excluding students who have received two doses of vaccine but are within the time interval waiting for the third dose² or students aged 5 to 11 years who are required to receive only two doses of BioNTech vaccine⁵, or students with prior COVID-19 infection who are not required to take the third dose of vaccine) reach the percentages as listed in the following table, a certificate will be issued to the school and the list of awarded schools will also be uploaded onto the EDB website to recognise their achievements. The certificates will be presented in December, February, April and June. Schools that have achieved three or more Gold Awards will receive a Platinum Award. In view that the Government has only recently lowered the age of Sinovac vaccines to young children, students in KGs only need to receive two doses of vaccine to be qualified as meeting the requirements of this “Commendation Scheme”.

Vaccination rate of students having received three doses of vaccine (counting from the data of the first day of each award-giving month)	Award
90% or above	Gold
80% or above to 90% or below	Silver
70% or above to 80% or below	Bronze

⁵ Such students are qualified for the commendation scheme if they have received two doses of BioNTech vaccine

Early and Full Vaccination for All

Vaccination is the most effective safeguard measure as it can prevent severe cases and reduce the risk of fatalities effectively. Students (especially young children) belong to one of the priority protection groups. The eligible age for COVID-19 vaccination has been further lowered to 6 months. In this regard, we strongly urge schools to make full use of the different channels provided by the Government to arrange for students to be vaccinated. If students have already received the first and second doses of the vaccine, we encourage them to receive the third dose by following the latest Government recommendation in order to achieve comprehensive and enhanced protection. Schools should maximise the use of various channels proactively to promote vaccination activities at school to encourage students to actively get vaccinated. We will also keep the related vaccination requirements for the resumption of whole-day face-to-face classrooms and extra-curricular activities under constant review.

Paying Attention to the Mental Health of Students

At the beginning of the new school year, individual students may have to adjust themselves to settle in. We encourage students to share their school life with parents, teachers or peers. If they encounter any difficulties, they should face the challenges and seek help proactively. To accompany students who may experience emotional distress arising from school adjustment issues, the EDB collaborated with the Hong Kong Jockey Club Online Youth Emotional Support Platform “Open Up” (www.openup.hk) to set up a 24-hour online chat platform “Open Up – Time-limited Support Platform for the New School Year”, operated exclusively during the school commencement period from 25 August to 30 September 2022 via social media and other messaging tools (including a contact number (9191 2012) and other social media platforms). To enhance home-school cooperation and build a stronger safety net for students, we encourage schools to disseminate respective e-poster, tips and e-reminder to students and parents through the school intranet or website before the new school year commences.

<p>“Open Up – Time-limited Support Platform for the New School Year” e-Poster (Chinese version only): https://mentalhealth.edb.gov.hk/en/promotion-at-the-universal-level/student-zone/79.html</p>	
<p>Tips and e-Reminder for Parents (Chinese version only): https://mentalhealth.edb.gov.hk/en/promotion-at-the-universal-level/parent-zone/78.html</p>	

We also request schools to consult the school-based educational psychologist (SBEP) and revisit the key points in “A Resource Handbook for Schools: Detecting, Supporting and Making Referral for Students with Suicidal Behaviours” with teachers through staff meetings or school-based workshops. This will heighten teachers’ alertness in detecting

students with mental health needs and enable early identification of those at risk. Schools should also review and strengthen their internal mechanisms so as to ensure that the students concerned are referred to the school social workers, SBEP, guidance personnel or other professionals for appropriate support in a timely manner.

A Resource Handbook for Schools: Detecting, Supporting and Making Referral for Students with Suicidal Behaviours:
<https://mentalhealth.edb.gov.hk/en/early-identification-at-the-selective-level/resources-and-guidelines/25.html>



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verena', written over a thin horizontal line.

(Dr Verena LAU)
for Secretary for Education

**Notice of Whole-Day Face-to-Face Classes
for Whole School / Individual Class Level(s)**
(With effect from 1 November 2022)

To: _____ District School Development Section [Fax no. : _____]

In accordance with the letter issued by the Education Bureau (EDB) on 30 August 2022, we certify that we have fulfilled the conditions for arrangements of whole-day face-to-face classes for the whole school / individual class level(s) (‘✓’ as appropriate in the following box):

- whole-day face-to-face classes for the whole school - the number of students who have received three doses of vaccine (excluding students who have received two doses of vaccine but are still within the time interval waiting for the third dose, or those students aged 5 to 11 who are required to receive only two doses of BioNTech vaccine, or those students who had prior COVID-19 infection and are not required to receive the third dose) has reached 90% of the total number of students of the school eligible to receive vaccination.
- whole-day face-to-face classes for individual class level(s) - the number of students who have received three doses of COVID-19 vaccine (excluding students who have received two doses of vaccine but are still within the time interval waiting for the third dose, or those students aged 5 to 11 who are required to receive only two doses of BioNTech vaccine, or those students who had prior COVID-19 infection who are not required to receive the third dose) has reached 90% of the total number of students of _____ (please fill in the class level(s)) eligible to receive vaccination.

Note : Students who are unfit for vaccination with medical proofs, students who have previously been infected with COVID-19 which render them unable to be vaccinated , and those who are not in Hong Kong will not be counted towards the total number of student population eligible to receive vaccination.

With the endorsement of our Incorporated Management Committee / School Management Committee, our school plans to initiate the above-mentioned arrangement from ____ (day) _____ (month) _____ (year) on (_____) (day of the week). We will strictly observe 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.

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

