



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育統籌局
Education and Manpower Bureau
Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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26 March 2008

To: Supervisors / Principals of all Primary Schools, Kindergartens,
Kindergarten cum Child Care Centres and Special Schools

Dear Supervisor / Principal,

**Prevention of the Spread of Influenza in Schools
Arrangements for School Resumption after Easter Holidays**

The Education Bureau (EDB) and the Department of Health (DH) have assessed and examined the spread of influenza in schools and the latest development. In view of the fact that the situation of influenza infection has become stable in recent days, schools have cleansed and disinfected their school premises during the Easter holidays and the message on the adoption of measures to prevent influenza has been conveyed to parents, we have decided that schools should resume classes on or after 31 March 2008 (i.e. after the end of the Easter holidays originally scheduled by schools).

To prevent the spread of influenza in schools after school resumption and to minimise the risks of students being infected, schools and parents should remain vigilant. Schools should adopt appropriate measures in accordance with the following guidelines before and after school resumption:

1. Preparation before school resumption

- 1.1 Before school resumption, schools must adopt hygienic and influenza- preventive measures which include ensuring a clean and hygienic school environment and providing clear information to the staff and parents. For detailed information, schools should visit the webpage of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of DH via the following link or path and refer to the **“Prevention of Influenza:**

Action Checklist for School Resumption" issued by CHP on 26 March 2008.

< http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Checklist_E_20080325_1930_.pdf >

Centre for Health Protection -> Influenza Page ->Prevention of Influenza ^{New} ->
Prevention of Influenza: Action Checklist for School Resumption (March 2008).

- 1.2 Schools should contact parents before school resumption as far as possible to remind and urge them to pay attention to their children's hygiene and environmental hygiene so as to complement the appropriate influenza- preventive measures adopted by schools as well as the arrangements for postponement of examinations/tests/activities (if applicable). Attached is a sample letter to parents for reference.
 - 1.3 Schools should liaise with school bus providers to ensure that school bus services will resume on the day of school resumption. Schools should require that drivers of school buses/nanny vans and escorts must not drive/board these vehicles and should make other appropriate arrangements if they run a fever or have other flu symptoms, and that they should inform schools and parents immediately.
 - 1.4 Schools should liaise with lunch-box suppliers to ensure that lunch-box supplies will resume on the day of school resumption, and remind them to pay attention to hygiene.
2. Arrangements after school resumption
- 2.1 As mentioned in paragraph 1.1 above, after school resumption, schools must also adopt hygienic and influenza-preventive measures which include checking students' body temperature, maintaining environmental hygiene, maintaining personal hygiene and healthy lifestyle, observing health condition of students and staff recovering from influenza, keeping sick leave records of staff and students, and taking care of sick students in school. For detailed information, schools should refer to the "**Prevention of Influenza: Action Checklist for School Resumption**" mentioned above.
 - 2.2 If schools cannot write to parents before school resumption as stated in paragraph 1.2 above because of their own situation, they should issue a circular to parents on the first day of school resumption to remind and urge them to pay attention to their children's hygiene and environmental hygiene so as to complement the appropriate influenza-preventive measures adopted by schools.
 - 2.3 Schools should make appropriate arrangements for examinations/tests/activities

originally scheduled to be held during the advanced period of the Easter holidays. In case of any students being absent due to sickness, schools should provide learning support for them as far as possible so that their learning progress would not be affected.

2.4 Schools should require the drivers of school buses/nanny vans and escorts to take their body temperatures every day, and act in accordance with paragraph 1.3 above.

2.5 Schools should deploy dedicated staff or form a crisis management team to coordinate or supervise matters relating to the hygienic condition of school environment and to brief the staff and students on the knowledge of influenza, and advise parents to take influenza-preventive measures. They can also visit the webpage of the CHP of DH via the following link or path and refer to the "Advice on School Disinfection at the Height of Influenza Season" issued by CHP on 19 March 2008.

< http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/Advice_on_School_Disinfection_Eng.pdf >

Centre for Health Protection -> Influenza Page ->Prevention of Influenza^{New} -> Advice on School Disinfection at the Height of Influenza Season.

2.6 Where necessary, schools may make use of the "Operating Expenses Block Grant" to purchase masks or other stuff for prevention of the spread of influenza.

2.7 Schools should ensure that all windows in the classrooms are kept open to maintain ventilation and brief students not to share personal items, particularly towels and tissue papers, with others.

3. Keeping sick leave records of staff and students and reporting any irregularities

3.1 On any school day, there could be occasional cases of influenza infection. Schools should contact the staff and parents/guardians of absentees to ascertain the cause of absence if there is an increase of absentees or an unusual sick leave pattern is noticed.

3.2 When an increase of absentees suffering from the same infectious disease and with similar symptoms or an unusual absenteeism pattern is noticed (i.e. where 3 or more students in the same class develop similar symptoms in succession within a short time), schools should report the case/s to the Central Notification Office of DH (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770) by completing the attached "Suspected Infectious Disease Outbreak in School / Kindergarten Notification Form" for epidemiological investigation and outbreak control, and forward a copy of the

Notification Form to their respective Regional Education Offices / Pre-primary Services Office for record purpose.

4. Other Arrangements

If influenza outbreaks are detected in individual schools, the EDB and DH would assess the situation to determine whether those schools should suspend classes. Each case has to be assessed on its own merits. Relevant factors for consideration could be the number of students in the school with influenza symptoms, whether there are over 1% of students in the school having been admitted to hospitals due to influenza illness, or whether there are cases of serious influenza-related complications requiring admission to the Intensive Care Unit in hospital.

We would like to appeal to schools again that they should keep their school environment clean and remind their staff and students to observe personal hygiene at all times. They should also properly adopt all influenza-preventive measures.

For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officer / Pre-primary Services Officer.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Michelle WONG
for Secretary for Education

[Sample Letter to Parents]

(This sample letter is for reference only. Individual schools should edit the sample letter in the light of their own situation.)

xx 2008

Dear Parents,

1. According to the announcement of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), Hong Kong has entered its peak season for influenza since mid-February. The circulating viruses are all seasonal influenza viruses that are commonly found in other parts of the world over the past few months and it is expected that the influenza situation will persist for a period of time this year. Having assessed the situation and examined the latest development, the Education Bureau (EDB) and DH are of the view that the influenza infection situation has become stable, and have thus decided that schools should resume classes on or after 31 March 2008 (i.e. after the end of the Easter holiday originally scheduled by schools).
2. We have cleansed and disinfected our school premises during the Easter holidays, and will urge staff and students to pay attention to personal and environmental hygiene.
3. It is incumbent upon all of us to prevent the spread of influenza. To safeguard students' health, parents are urged to maintain a hygienic household, and co-operate with us by reminding students to observe personal hygiene and keep schools hygienic. In this connection, you are kindly requested to take the following measures:
 - Do not send children to school if they have fever. (For the normal body temperature range, please refer to the guidelines pertaining to the means for measuring body temperature.)
 - Inform school immediately if children are sick or have been admitted to hospital for surveillance.
 - Keep sick children at home until symptoms have improved and fever has subsided. Then, take rest for at least 2 more days before returning to school.
 - Co-operate with schools by picking up children not feeling well from school and consulting the doctor immediately.

- Provide children with handkerchiefs or tissue papers and remind them not to share towels or tissue papers with others.
 - Before sending children to school, measure their body temperature, record the reading and sign the temperature record sheet, which should be handed to the school every day. Attached please find a temperature record sheet.
4. Lunch-box supplies and school bus service will resume on the day of school resumption. We have also urged the drivers of school buses/nanny vans and escorts not to drive/board these vehicles and make suitable arrangements if they run a fever or have any flu symptoms. School and parents will be immediately informed.
 5. Examinations/tests/activities planned to be held during the advanced period of the Easter holidays will be postponed to _____ (date) / cancelled.
 6. In case of any students being absent due to sickness, we would provide learning support for them as far as possible so that their learning progress would not be affected.
 7. We would like to appeal to parents for collaboration in order to maintain a clean and healthy living environment. Please also remind your children to pay attention to personal hygiene and to take influenza-preventive measures.

Principal of (school name)

Signature of Principal

Suspected Infectious Disease Outbreak in School / Kindergarten

NOTIFICATION FORM

To: Central Notification Office (CENO), Centre for Health Protection (Fax: 2477 2770)

cc: (Fax :)

NOTE: To enable prompt investigation and control of outbreak, please call CENO by phone (2477 2772) before sending fax notification.

School name:	_____	(Code no.: _____)
School address:	_____ _____	
Contact person:	_____ (Post: _____)	Fax: _____
Tel (office hours):	_____	Tel (outside office hours): _____
Total no. of students:	_____	Total no. of staff: _____
No. of sick students:	_____	(No. admitted into hospital : _____)
No. of sick staff:	_____	(No. admitted into hospital : _____)
Common symptoms: (May tick multiple)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fever <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Runny nose <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhoea <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting <input type="checkbox"/> Skin rash <input type="checkbox"/> Blisters on hand/foot <input type="checkbox"/> Oral ulcers <input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please specify: _____)	
Suspected disease:	_____	
Reported by:	_____	Contact tel.: _____
Signature:	_____	Date of fax: _____ (dd/mm/yyyy)