

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (43) in DH SEB CD/8/1

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21 August 2009

Dear Headmaster/Person-in-charge,

Be vigilant against human swine influenza and other communicable diseases

The new academic year is approaching and I would like to take this opportunity to urge you to keep vigilant against human swine influenza and other communicable diseases at child care centres, kindergartens and schools.

Human swine influenza (HSI), also known as Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, is a new influenza virus strain of swine origin that was first detected in April 2009. Latest surveillance data shows that HSI is now widely circulating in our community. Although HSI causes a relatively mild illness in most persons, it is efficiently spread, given the lack of antibodies in the population, especially among children and adolescents. As the new school year starts, it is very likely that some HSI outbreaks will occur in schools. In order to prevent the spread of HSI in schools after the commencement of the new school year and minimize the students' chance of being infected, schools and parents should always stay vigilant against HSI. The *“Guideline on Prevention of Human Swine Influenza for Commencement of the New School Year (July 2009)”* (http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/school_resumption_guideline_E_20090720.pdf) provides guidance to reduce HSI transmission and prevent large-scale outbreaks from occurring.

Besides HSI, outbreaks of other communicable diseases, like chickenpox, influenza, norovirus, and hand, foot and mouth disease may occur in institutions from time to time. To prevent such outbreaks, it is important for your staff and pupils to observe good personal hygiene. You are advised to re-visit the updated *“Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools /Kindergartens /Kindergartens-cum-Child Care Centres / Child Care Centres”* (http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School_full_eng_20090115.pdf), which



contain practical information on preventive measures of some common communicable diseases.

In addition, you are reminded to continue temperature checking for students. Students who develop symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting, skin rash, fever, or influenza-like illness should seek medical advice.

If you suspect any outbreaks occurring in your institution, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

When there is outbreak of infectious disease in your institution, if the situation warrants, the Centre for Health Protection may consider advising the affected schools/centres to suspend classes for a period of time, based on factors such as the number of children affected, the number of children with severe illness and number of hospitalisations, the progression of the outbreak and whether it is responsive to control measures.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

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Centre for Health Protection

