

CHP investigates influenza A outbreak at kindergarten in Kwai Tsing

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 18) investigating an influenza A outbreak at a kindergarten in Kwai Tsing.

The outbreak involves 10 boys and 10 girls aged 3 to 6, who have developed fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose since October 12. Nineteen of them sought medical attention. Five patients required hospitalisation and three of them were discharged after treatment. All patients are in a stable condition.

The nasopharyngeal swab of three students tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the school and advised the school to adopt infection control measures against respiratory infections. The school has been put under medical surveillance.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever, regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school. They should seek medical advice and avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Schools should also measure and record students' body temperature properly."

Schools are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks, which should be reported to the CHP for prompt follow-up.

The Vaccination Subsidy Scheme 2018/19 was launched on October 10. The spokesman for the CHP urged eligible persons to receive subsidised seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves in the coming winter influenza season.

"Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive SIV for personal protection," the spokesman said.

"Based on past epidemiological patterns, the winter influenza season usually occurs from January to March/April each year. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, we urge eligible persons to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Vaccination among family members is key to protecting their personal and family's health."

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for

protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive SIV for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).

[SED visits Southern District \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, visited Southern District this afternoon (October 18) to see children's learning through play at a kindergarten and brief District Council members on the education initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the Southern District Council (SDC), Mr Chu Ching-hong; the Vice Chairman of the SDC, Mr Chan Fu-ming; and the District Officer (Southern), Mrs Dorothy Ma, Mr Yeung first visited TWGHs Tin Wan (1996-1997 Directors) Kindergarten, where he was briefed on the kindergarten's characteristics, such as picture book teaching and promotion of reading activities.

While observing a class to appreciate storytelling by students, he also joined their extended learning activities, including learning language and vocabulary through cake tasting, and learning art and craft through making clay pizza.

Mr Yeung said that reading can inspire students' interest in pursuing knowledge and their self-directed learning ability. To instil in children a love for reading, the Education Bureau (EDB) launched the Pilot Scheme on the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens in the current school year. It is now open to application by kindergartens until October 22.

Participating kindergartens, based on their student numbers, will receive a grant of \$5,000 or \$10,000 for procuring reading resources, organising school-based activities related to the promotion of reading, and hiring of services to organise reading activities. With the participation of the kindergarten sector, the EDB hopes that the Pilot Scheme could help it understand and examine different modes of reading promotion, with a view to formulating long-term strategies catering for early childhood.

Mr Yeung added that the Government has implemented the new kindergarten education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year with a substantial increase in government expenditure to enhance teachers' remuneration, reduce parents' financial burden and improve the quality of teaching. The EDB plans to start a review in mid-2019 on the implementation of the new policy, including the salary arrangements for kindergarten teachers and other measures. During the process, stakeholders will be consulted with the aim of improving the kindergarten education policy.

He then went to the SDC to brief its members on the content of the Policy Address and exchange views with them on education and other district issues.





[CE visits STEM Education Centre](#)

To mark the first anniversary of the opening of the STEM Education Centre under the Education Bureau, the event "STEM Education Centre: Supporting STEM education and sharing of students' achievement" was held today (October 18). The event aimed to consolidate the experience on supporting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in schools over the past year, share students' work and introduce the services for this school year.

The Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam officiated the event at the STEM Education Centre in Lok Fu.

Mrs Lam, accompanied by the Under Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, visited various facilities in the Centre and showed appreciation for prize-winning students' work and students' achievements, including a 3D printed Chinese cultural architecture design model as well as air-cushioned sliding raft and hovercraft model projects. She also visited the Maker Space of the Centre and observed students' participation in STEM learning activities.

The STEM Education Centre will organise various STEM education related courses and activities this school year, including STEM education training programmes for teachers to enhance their pedagogical knowledge, and inter-school competitions for students to provide opportunities for them to integrate and apply knowledge and skills acquired, unleash creativity and solve problems through hands-on learning experiences. The Centre will continue to provide school-based support services to partner schools with on-site support and experience sharing to support them to further promote STEM education.

The STEM Education Centre has been providing support to primary and secondary schools in promoting STEM education since its opening in October 2017. Detailed information of the STEM Education Centre is available on its website (www.atec.edu.hk/stemcentre).

Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in August 2018

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for August 2018 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (October 18) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In August 2018, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods increased by 10.5% over August 2017. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods increased by 13.6%.

Comparing the first eight months of 2018 with the same period in 2017, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods increased by 7.3%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods increased by 9.1%.

Comparing the three-month period ending August 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods remained virtually unchanged. On the other hand, the volume of imports of goods increased by 1.5%.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.6%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 2.7%.

As regards price changes in the first eight months of 2018 over the same period in 2017, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.5%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 2.6%.

Price changes in external merchandise trade are reflected by changes in unit value indices of external merchandise trade, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, specific price data.

The terms of trade index is derived from the ratio of price index of total exports of goods to that of imports of goods. Compared with the same periods in 2017, the index decreased by 0.1% in both August 2018 and in the first eight months of 2018.

Changes in the unit value and volume of total exports of goods by main destination are shown in Table 1.

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, the total export volume to Vietnam and India increased significantly, by 23.4% and 22.5% respectively. Concurrently, the total export volume to the USA, the mainland of China (the Mainland) and Japan increased by 14.3%, 9.6% and 2.1% respectively.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to the Mainland, the USA and Japan increased by 3.7%, 3.1% and 2.7% respectively. On the other hand, the total export prices to Vietnam and India decreased by 0.9% and 2.8% respectively.

Changes in the unit value and volume of imports of goods by main supplier are shown in Table 2.

Comparing August 2018 with August 2017, double-digit increases were recorded for the import volume from Korea (+12.5%) and the Mainland (+12.3%). Concurrently, the import volume from Taiwan, Japan and Singapore increased by 4.7%, 3.6% and 2.1% respectively.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from all main suppliers increased: Korea (+7.9%), the Mainland (+3.2%), Singapore (+2.9%), Japan (+2.5%) and Taiwan (+0.7%).

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the August 2018 issue of "Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Index Numbers". Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp?productCode=B1020006).

Enquiries on merchandise trade indices may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4918).

Vegetable stall of Ka Wo Farming Limited at Shui Wo Street in Kwun Tong convicted for causing noise nuisance by persistently playing promotional recordings

Vegetable chain stall operated by Ka Wo Farming Limited at Shui Wo Street in Kwun Tong caused noise nuisance to nearby residents by persistently playing promotional recordings. It was fined \$6,000 by Kwun Tong Magistrates'

Courts today (October 18) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO).

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that repeated complaints were received from members of the public since last November about the noise nuisance caused by a vegetable stall in the vicinity of Shui Wo Street in Kwun Tong. The stall used loudspeakers to play promotional recordings persistently at the front door and adversely affected nearby residents. The EPD conducted several enforcement operations and during the operation in April, the stall ignored the warning given by the EPD and continued to play promotional recordings loudly. Upon on-site assessment by EPD staff at residential premises nearby, it was confirmed that the noise generated annoyance and the department subsequently prosecuted the operating company of the vegetable stall, Ka Wo Farming Limited, in accordance with the NCO.

The vegetable chain stalls operated by Ka Wo Farming Limited at Yuen Long New Street and San Tsuen Street in Tsuen Wan have three conviction records for the same offence and were fined a total of \$15,000 in March and April this year. The EPD is concerned about the repeated contraventions by some chain stores in generating excessive noise repeatedly and persistently. The EPD will closely monitor the noise levels of relevant stalls and conduct stringent enforcement actions to combat the illegal and unethical behaviour. For individual stalls with repeated contraventions, the company director will also be convicted and criminally liable for the offence.

The spokesman reminded retail shops and their responsible persons that when they play promotional recordings to sell goods, they should contain the noise level within their shop area as far as possible and should not cause annoyance to nearby residents. Otherwise, it constitutes an offence, and offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000.