

Further suspension of face-to-face classes for all schools

As the situation of COVID-19 remains severe, the Government needs to continue to take stringent measures to cope with the epidemic. The Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (December 21) that all kindergartens as well as primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum) would further suspend face-to-face classes and school activities after their scheduled Christmas holidays until January 10, 2021. During the period, private schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") will also suspend face-to-face classes and school activities of all levels.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "During the period of suspension of face-to-face classes and school activities, schools should continue to adopt diversified modes of teaching to facilitate students to continue learning at home. Similar to the arrangements before the Christmas holidays, schools can consider arranging Primary Six students to return to schools on a need basis to take the internal assessment for the purpose of Secondary School Places Allocation, and arranging Secondary Six classes or classes participating in this academic year's overseas public examinations to return to schools to attend lessons to prepare for the examinations or take internal examinations at schools. The examinations or face-to-face classes should be conducted on a half-day basis. The upper limit for students to return to a school for face-to-face classes and examinations should be capped at one-sixth of the school's maximum permitted capacity.

"Moreover, after the scheduled school Christmas holidays, schools should remain open to take care of those students who have to go back to schools because of the lack of carers at home. Schools should also arrange staff to be on duty to handle school affairs, answer parents' enquiries and take care of those students who have returned to schools. In this regard, schools should put in place all health protection measures and ensure the environmental hygiene of the school premises. We will issue a letter to inform schools of the details so that schools can make advance preparation."

In view of the severity of the epidemic, the EDB spokesman strongly appealed to school staff and students that they should avoid going out, having crowd gatherings and social contacts as well as dining out during the Christmas holidays. Parents should take precautionary measures for COVID-19 as well as pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. Students should maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and take adequate rest in order to strengthen their immunity. If students are feeling unwell (even if the symptoms are very mild), they should seek medical advice promptly to receive appropriate diagnoses and treatments.