

Government announces class arrangements after Easter holidays

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (March 26) announced the arrangements for face-to-face classes for all kindergartens (KGs) and primary and secondary schools after the schools' Easter holidays.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The EDB has all along been progressively increasing the time for face-to-face classes in a pragmatic, gradual and orderly manner, as far as the epidemic situation allows, striving to strike a balance between meeting the learning needs of students and preventing and fighting the epidemic, with a view to allowing students to have more learning time on campus. Hence, the EDB, after taking into account the latest developments of the epidemic, the advice of health experts and the preparedness of schools, has decided that all KGs and primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum) as well as private schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") will be allowed to arrange for more students to return to campuses on a half-day basis in accordance with school-based circumstances after the schools' Easter holidays, with the number of students capped at two-thirds of the schools' total number of students.

"We expect that schools can arrange for students of each level to take turns to return to school for face-to-face classes so that all students will have the opportunity to have on-campus schooling, receive education through face-to-face classes, and have interactive learning with other students so as to enhance their physical and psychosocial development."

As for the lesson times each day, secondary schools can arrange for students of individual levels to attend face-to-face classes either in the morning or in the afternoon for no more than a half day. Schools should not arrange for students of the same level to attend face-to-face classes for a whole day and should avoid having students eat out for lunch. Primary schools can arrange for students of individual levels to attend face-to-face classes in the morning only for no more than a half day. For KGs, those operating morning sessions/afternoon sessions can arrange for students to return to school for half-day lessons in the morning/afternoon respectively. KGs operating whole-day sessions can arrange for students to attend face-to-face classes either in the morning or in the afternoon for no more than a half day. Regarding the above arrangements for KGs as well as primary and secondary schools, the number of students returning to campus should be capped at two-thirds of the schools' total number of students for each session. The EDB will issue a letter to inform schools of the detailed arrangements next week.

The spokesman continued, "The EDB is thankful to schools for putting in place the epidemic preventative measures properly. In accordance with the existing arrangements, for an individual school that can arrange for all its

teachers and staff to take regular virus tests, the EDB will, taking into account the school's actual situation, consider allowing the school to arrange whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes. We encourage schools to continue to actively participate in the scheme. At present, the Government is offering multiple locations and modes to facilitate virus testing. In addition, the fees for the testing services at the Community Testing Centres for teachers and staff have been waived."

In addition, following the launch of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, the EDB encourages teachers and staff of schools to get vaccinated so as to protect the health of themselves, staff and students of schools as well as the community and help all to return to normal life early.

The EDB reminds schools that before the full resumption of face-to-face classes and school activities, they should take appropriate preventive measures and use various learning modes flexibly to sustain the learning of students at home. During this period, schools should remain open to take care of those students who have to go back to school because of a lack of carers at home.

During the schools' Easter holidays, parents should continue taking precautionary measures for COVID-19 as well as pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. They should avoid taking their children to crowded places with poor ventilation. 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 diagnosis and treatment.