

Government announces extension of arrangements for Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism and relevant enhanced measures

The Government announced today (January 29) the extension of the implementation of the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism to December 31 this year and the launch of new measures to enhance the support for schools to early identify students with higher suicidal risk.

A Government spokesperson said, "The Government is implementing the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism through cross-departmental collaboration of the Education Bureau (EDB), the Health Bureau and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) from December 2023 to January 2024 in all secondary schools in Hong Kong to provide students with higher suicidal risk with support as early as possible. After reviewing the relevant circumstances and listening to the views of the sector, the Government has decided to extend the implementation period of the Mechanism and will continue to closely monitor the operation of the Mechanism."

Under the Three-Tier Mechanism, schools will give priority to take care of and counsel students with higher suicidal risk through the school's interdisciplinary team in the first tier by providing timely assistance or seeking professional counselling or treatment services for them. If schools have difficulty in deploying manpower, the EDB will assist them to refer the cases to the off-campus support network team organised by the SWD in the second tier. The third tier is the last line of defence, providing medical services to students with severe mental-health needs.

In addition, to enhance school personnel's knowledge of and skills in supporting students with mental-health needs, the EDB will organise more than 40 training courses and workshops for schools from end-January to March to introduce related practical skills, counselling techniques and intervention strategies.

The EDB will also collaborate with the SWD to arrange for non-governmental organisations to visit secondary schools and organise mental-health activities from February to April, to enhance students' awareness of mental health, help them develop positive thinking as well as strengthen their adaptability and awareness of help-seeking.

The EDB has issued a circular letter to all secondary schools to inform them of the extension of the implementation of the Mechanism and details of the enhanced school-based support.

The Government will continue to strengthen cross-departmental

collaboration for more comprehensive efforts in promoting students' mental health, with a view to helping schools and parents support students with mental-health needs, thereby building a stronger safety net for them.