

## School outreach service for COVID-19 vaccination launched today (with photos)

The Government's school outreach service for COVID-19 vaccination was launched today (July 2). About 300 students, teachers and parents from Queen Elizabeth School Old Students' Association Secondary School (QESOSASS), Cumberland Presbyterian Church Yao Dao Secondary School, Queen Elizabeth School Old Students' Association Primary School and Queen Elizabeth School Old Students' Association Branch Primary School received COVID-19 vaccination at the campus of QESOSASS through the outreach vaccination service.

Around 400 more students, teachers and parents from Hong Kong Taoist Association Ching Chung Secondary School (CCSS), Leung Shek Chee College and Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Bishop Hall Secondary School also received COVID-19 vaccination at the campus of CCSS through the outreach vaccination service.

These seven schools were the first batch of schools that opted for the outreach vaccination service for their students to receive the Comirnaty vaccine after the minimum age for receiving the vaccine was lowered from 16 years old to 12.

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, visited QESOSASS to view the administering and arrangements for the outreach vaccination today, while the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, and the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, jointly visited CCSS to view the vaccination situation there.

Mr Nip said, "Students getting vaccinated can safeguard their health and help resume a normal school life. I am delighted to see many students come together today and get vaccinated in a school campus. Such a move will not only protect themselves and their families, but also help reduce the risk of the spread of the virus in schools."

Professor Chan said, "COVID-19 poses a serious global threat to public health, especially with the mutant strains ravaging the world recently. The benefits of lowering the age limit for receiving the Comirnaty vaccine outweigh the risks. Not only can it protect adolescents from COVID-19 infection, it also enables them to resume normal school and daily life as soon as possible. In fact, the protection for persons aged 12 to 15 is significant upon completion of two doses of the Comirnaty vaccine. The level of antibodies developed in them is higher than that in adults, with 100 per cent efficacy against the disease. I hope that parents will arrange for their children aged 12 and above to get vaccinated as soon as possible, to build an immunity barrier for the community and help Hong Kong ride out the epidemic."

Mr Yeung expressed gratitude to all the school staff and students who

received the vaccine together, making a concerted effort to build a herd immunity barrier in school campuses. He said, "The Education Bureau will continue to keep track of the developments of the epidemic and preparedness of schools, and consider health experts' advice, with a view to mapping out in late July or early August the schooling arrangements for the new academic year.

"Undoubtedly, in terms of individual schools and the territory-wide level, the more school staff and students can get vaccinated to enhance the safety of school campuses, the higher the chance of resuming normal schooling arrangements will be. I call on all of you to take the vaccine early."

Apart from the school outreach vaccination service, some primary and secondary schools have been reserving time slots for vaccination at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) through group booking since last Monday. Meanwhile, some parents are also making their own appointments for their children to get vaccinated.

Mr Nip said, "So far, more than 300 primary and secondary schools have expressed interest in using the school outreach vaccination service or reserving time slots for vaccination at CVCs through group booking, with the latter being the majority. Among them, 22 schools have already used the group booking service. In the face of the threat posed by mutant strains, we need more young people's support to get vaccinated so as to help build an immune barrier in Hong Kong as soon as possible. I hope that schools can plan actively so as to provide their students with a safe and healthy learning environment under the epidemic."

Professor Chan expressed gratitude to the healthcare staff members of the Hospital Authority (HA)'s Kowloon East Cluster for their participation in the outreach vaccination service at CCSS today to actively participate in the "Early Vaccination for All" campaign and contribute to the epidemic prevention and control work in Hong Kong.

Mr Nip also expressed his gratitude to the HA's medical team of the CVC at Yuen Long Sports Centre for providing the outreach service at QESOSASS.

To facilitate vaccination of students, staff members of schools and parents, schools can choose to reserve time slots at CVCs through group bookings. The Government will arrange to transport staff members of schools, students or parents between schools and CVCs. Should the schools have a certain number of staff members, students and parents for vaccination and be able to provide suitable venues with cleaning arrangements, the Government can arrange for the outreach vaccination service at schools, which will be provided by the medical teams of the current CVC operators.

