

Suspension of face-to-face classes of Primary One to Primary Three

In light of the latest situation of the COVID-19 epidemic and the outbreak of upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) in schools, the Government announced today (November 20) that starting from next Monday (November 23), face-to-face classes and all school activities of Primary One to Primary Three of all primary schools (including schools offering non-local curriculum) and primary sections of special schools, would be suspended until December 6 (Sunday).

A spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) said, "As for Primary Four to Primary Six of primary schools and all levels of secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum), schools should strictly observe all the health protection measures when conducting face-to-face classes and school activities, including maintaining appropriate social distances, checking of body temperatures upon entry into school premises, wearing of masks at all times inside the school premises, etc, so as to safeguard the health and well-being of teachers and students. In view of the worsening trend of the epidemic, schools are requested not to arrange activities which require students to take off their masks."

The spokesman continued, "In case of any URTI or confirmed case of COVID-19 being reported, schools must follow the advice of the Centre for Health Protection on suspension of face-to-face classes and related epidemic prevention measures, including suspending the affected classes concerned during specified periods."

In addition, the Government has earlier announced that kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres would suspend face-to-face classes and all school activities for two weeks starting from November 14 (Saturday) to November 27 (Friday). In view of the latest situation, all kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres will continue to suspend face-to-face classes and all school activities to December 6 (Sunday).

The EDB will issue letters to inform schools of the related arrangements and measures that schools should implement during this period to sustain students' learning at home through flexible use of various learning modes. During the suspension of face-to-face classes, 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 arrange staff to be on duty to handle school affairs, answer parents' enquiries and take care of those students who have returned to schools. Schools should also ensure that the campus environment is clean and hygienic.

Parents should take precautionary measures for influenza and pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. They should avoid bringing 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 must not return to schools and should seek medical advice promptly to receive appropriate diagnoses and treatments.

The Government will closely monitor the development of the epidemic, maintain close liaison with the school sector and provide timely support to schools.