

Music Office's Instrumental Music Training Scheme invites applications from beginners

The Instrumental Music Training Scheme organised by the Music Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department is now recruiting beginners for its 2018-19 Elementary Year 1 courses. The deadline for application is August 7. The scheme seeks to encourage young people to develop their talent and interest in music through a systematic programme of music training in their free time.

The scheme provides training in almost 30 Chinese and Western musical instruments including violin, viola, cello, double bass, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, French horn, trombone, suona, sheng, dizi, erhu, pipa, zhongruan and others, with supplementary training in musicianship and theory. Young people aged 6 to 14 with no instrumental experience are welcome to apply.

One-hour group lessons, conducted in Cantonese, will be held once a week at one of the Music Office's five music centres located in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Mong Kok, Sha Tin and Tsuen Wan. Annual tuition fees of \$1,710 for the first year and \$2,090 for the second year are payable in four instalments.

Online applications are now available at www.lcsd.gov.hk/musicoffice. Course pamphlets and application forms are now available at all Music Office music centres. Eligible applicants will be invited to attend a music aptitude test and an interview on August 26 and will be notified of the results by October. Training will commence in November.

For enquiries, please call the Music Office's music centres at 2802 0657 (Hong Kong), 2796 2893 (Kwun Tong), 2399 2200 (Mong Kok), 2158 6462 (Sha Tin) and 2417 6429 (Tsuen Wan).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, July 9, 2018 is 102.1 (down 0.3 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, July 7, 2018 was 102.4 (same as last Friday's index).

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 9) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From July 1 to 7, seven community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 64 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Wing Tai Building, 802-812 Canton Road, Yau Tsim Mong District;
2. A male patient, aged 82 with underlying illnesses, who lived in Pak Suet House, Choi Hung Estate, Wong Tai Sin District, and had passed away;
3. A male patient, aged 78 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Fook Wo House, Tai Wo Estate, Tai Po District;
4. A male patient, aged 74 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block 10, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Tsing District;
5. A female patient, aged 71 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Mei Shek House, Shek Mun Estate, Sha Tin District;
6. A male patient, aged 60 with underlying illnesses, who lives in King Man House, Ho Man Tin Estate, Kowloon City District; and
7. A male patient, aged 70 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Kwai Sun House, Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate, Kwun Tong District.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of July 7, 38 LD cases have been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets

(aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2- μm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Red flag hoisted at Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 9) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Results of targeted surveillance on Salmonella in ready-to-eat food all satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 9) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on Salmonella in ready-to-eat food, which showed that all samples passed the test.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "A total of 300 ready-to-eat food samples were collected from different retailers, including online retailers and food factories, for testing of Salmonella this year. The samples included dishes containing eggs, poultry and their products."

Salmonella can be found in eggs and food of animal origin. There is a risk of contracting salmonellosis if a person consumes undercooked food of animal origin, eggs or egg products, or food cross-contaminated with Salmonella.

Salmonella infection may cause fever and gastrointestinal upset such as

vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. The effects on infants, young children, the elderly and patients with a weak immune system can be more severe and sometimes may even lead to death.

Despite the fact that the test results of the samples were all satisfactory, the spokesman reminded the trade and the public not to take the risk lightly. They should maintain good personal and food hygiene to safeguard food safety. For example, they should cook meat, poultry and eggs thoroughly to ensure the juices of the meat are not red, blood is not visible when cooked meat is cut and the egg yolk and white are firm. Food manufacturers should take adequate measures to eliminate Salmonella in food during the food production process, and prevent re-contamination of food such as cross-contamination by raw ingredients with Salmonella. Moreover, they may consider choosing pasteurised egg products or dried egg powder to prepare dishes not requiring heat treatment, in particular ready-to-eat desserts.