

Home schooling without permission illegal

The Education Ministry released a notice on its website on Wednesday, stressing that parents or guardians are not allowed to educate children at home without permission from education authorities.

According to the Compulsory Education Law, all school-age children must attend primary and junior middle school.

Schools and local education authorities shoulder the responsibility of finding those children who do not go to school and persuading them to attend, the notice said.

“For children who cannot attend school due to reasons such as poor physical health, their parents or guardians should report to the local education authorities and ask for a delay in enrollment,” the notice said.

“They cannot give children home schooling as a substitute for school education if they fail to gain permission from the authorities.”

The notice was released against a backdrop of an increasing number of students being educated at home or attending small, private teaching institutes.

Research conducted by the 21st Century Education Research Institute estimated that the number of children who receive home schooling rather than attending school in China has risen from 2,000 in 2013 to 6,000 today.

Wang Jiajia, who led the research, said the legality of home schooling had long been controversial in China, but that the increasing number of parents and children wanting to do so demonstrated that the unified, standardized education provided in the nation’s schools cannot meet everyone’s needs.

Infectious diseases kill 18,000 Chinese in 2016

Infectious diseases killed 18,237 people on the Chinese mainland in 2016, according to official data revealed Thursday.

In 2016, there were more than 6.9 million cases of infectious diseases reported on the mainland, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

Of that total, one case of pestilence and 27 of cholera, both Class A infectious diseases, were reported but did not lead to fatalities.

More than 2.9 million cases were classified as Class B infectious diseases, which resulted in 17,968 deaths. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, rabies, hepatitis, and human infection of H7N9 avian influenza accounted for 98.8 percent of deaths in this category.

Category C diseases were responsible for more than 3.9 million cases and 269 deaths. Foot and mouth disease, infectious diarrhea, and influenza were the most prevalent in this category, accounting for 98.5 percent of deaths.

China to step up property tax legislation: official

China will move more swiftly in legislating a long-discussed property tax law, an official said on Thursday.

“It is a major task in China’s tax reform determined by policymakers, and the lawmaking process will be accelerated,” Lu Kehua, vice minister of housing and urban-rural development, said when answering questions on progress on the tax law during a press conference.

Related government agencies and legislators are carrying out work according to the plan, Lu added.

China has pushed forward the work for years, but progress has remained slow. A trial property tax has been introduced in Chongqing and Shanghai.

The law will fill the gap in taxing home ownership, as China’s current housing tax mechanism mainly taxes development and property sales.

Former Shanghai vice mayor stands trial for graft

Former vice mayor of Shanghai Ai Baojun on Thursday stood trial on charges of corruption at a court in the city of Zhangzhou, east China’s Fujian Province.

Prosecutors alleged that from 2002 to 2014, Ai, a former member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China Shanghai Municipal

Committee, took advantage of various official positions to help agencies and individuals with business operations and development, among other offences.

Ai was said to have accepted bribes worth more than 43.2 million yuan (6.28 million U.S. dollars) either personally or through his family.

In addition, he was accused of taking advantage of his positions to embezzle public assets worth more than 7.5 million yuan from 2001 to 2009.

Ai pleaded guilty and expressed remorse.

More than 40 people, including Ai's family, representatives of legislators and political advisors at national and local levels, as well as journalists and members of the public, were present at the open trial.

The verdict will be announced at a later date.

[41 stranded by snow in China](#)

Days of snow and rain have made roads inaccessible and stranded 41 highway maintenance workers in southwest China's Yunnan Province, local officials said Thursday.

The road under maintenance is in Pengdang township, Gongshan County. Although stranded, the workers are not in danger, said the publicity department of the county government.

Rescue is underway.