

Update on latest MERS situation in United Kingdom

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 3) closely monitoring an additional imported case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the United Kingdom (UK) in August 2018, and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, the case involves a male patient aged between 80 and 89 years with underlying illness, who is a resident of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) visiting the UK.

The patient was symptomatic while travelling from the KSA to the UK on August 16. Before the onset of symptoms, he had no history of recent travel or contact with sick patients in the KSA, but had history of direct contact with camels. The patient is now receiving treatment under isolation in the UK. According to the WHO, this is the fifth MERS case diagnosed in the UK, with the four previous cases diagnosed in 2012 and 2013.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus," the spokesman said.

The Hajj pilgrimage ended in late August. If pilgrims feel unwell during the two weeks after returning to Hong Kong, they should wear a surgical mask and seek medical attention immediately and inform a doctor of their recent travel history, including transit.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, September 3, 2018 is 104.1 (down 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, September 1, 2018 was 104.2 (up 0.2 against last Friday's index).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

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Primary School Profiles 2018 to be released

The following is issued on behalf of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation:

The Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) will upload the e-version (in Chinese and English) of the Primary School Profiles 2018 to the Internet on Wednesday (September 5). The Chinese and English printed versions of the profiles will be delivered to kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres for distribution to parents with children at the K3 level of the current school year.

The profiles provide basic information on more than 500 local primary schools covering school facilities, teaching staff information, class structure, performance assessment, school life, extra-curricular activities, school mission and school characteristics. To provide parents with more comprehensive information for making school choices, two columns on "Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" and "Education Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students" are newly added. The information is provided and verified by individual schools.

The publication of the profiles aims to provide parents with essential school information so as to enable them to choose a suitable school for their children. The profiles also include the "Message from CHSC Chairman", which states the key points for parents when choosing schools.

The e-version of the profiles enables schools to update their information on the Web directly, whenever necessary, so that parents can obtain the most up-to-date school information.

The profiles are divided by districts. Parents of children who will study at Primary One level in September 2019 will receive a copy of either the Chinese or English printed version of the profiles for their districts of residence through their respective kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres. For children not attending kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres, parents may obtain a copy from the School Places Allocation Section of the Education Bureau (EDB).

The public can access the e-version of the profiles by visiting the Primary School Profiles website at www.chsc.hk/primary or m.chsc.hk/primary (mobile version). Copies of the printed version will be available for public reference at District Offices, public libraries, Regional Education Offices and Central Resources Centre of the EDB.

For enquiries about the profiles, please call the Regional Education Offices (Hong Kong: 2863 4646; Kowloon: 3698 4108; New Territories East: 2639 4876; and New Territories West: 2437 7272) or the CHSC secretariat at 3698 4376.

Application forms for Primary One Admission available on Wednesday

Parents who want to apply for a Primary One (P1) place in government or aided schools for their children in September next year under the Primary One Admission (POA) System can obtain application forms starting from Wednesday (September 5) until October 2.

A spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) said today (September 3), "All Hong Kong children born on or before December 31, 2013, are eligible to join the POA System for admission to P1 in September 2019 provided they have not attended any primary schools and have never been allocated a P1 place.

"Parents of children who are attending kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres may obtain the application form, explanatory notes on how to complete the application form and a POA information leaflet from their kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres. For parents of children

not attending kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres, the documents can be obtained from District Offices (Home Affairs Enquiry Centres) and the EDB's Regional Education Offices and School Places Allocation Section."

At the Discretionary Places Admission stage, the school chosen is not restricted to the school net in which the child resides. Parents wishing to apply for a POA discretionary place in a government or aided primary school should submit the completed application form together with all supporting documents directly to the school during school office hours between September 24 and October 2.

"Commuting daily from the Mainland to schools in Hong Kong will impose pressure both mentally and physically on children. Parents of children residing in the Mainland should consider seriously the impact on students' learning. They should also understand the situation of various boundary control points and make early transport arrangements on their own for their children to travel to and from schools," the spokesman reminded parents of applicant children residing in the Mainland.

"Only one application should be submitted for each child. If parents are found to have applied to more than one government or aided primary school, their application for a POA discretionary place will be rendered void," he said.

If parents are applying only for the POA Central Allocation, they may return the completed application forms with supporting documents during the period from September 24, 2018, to January 25, 2019, to the EDB's School Places Allocation Section at Office 2, 2/F, Manulife Financial Centre, 223 Wai Yip Street, Kwun Tong, Kowloon.

"When completing the POA application form, parents should fill in the actual residential address of their child. If a false address is given by parents to secure a P1 place for their child under the POA System, the application will be rendered void and the P1 place allocated will be withdrawn. The public are encouraged to report suspected cases of using a false address for POA applications to the School Places Allocation Section by calling its hotline at 2832 7700," the spokesman said.

Information on the procedures for the different stages of POA, revised arrangements for applicant children residing in the Mainland to participate in the Central Allocation stage of the POA System and the discretionary places quota of each school will be available from Wednesday (September 5) on the EDB's 24-hour hotline at 2891 0088 and its homepage, www.edb.gov.hk; (path: Education System and Policy>Primary and Secondary School Education>School Places Allocation Systems>Primary One Admission System).

Parents who wish to enrol their children in Direct Subsidy Scheme primary schools, private primary schools or primary schools of the English Schools Foundation should apply directly to these schools as they are not included in the POA System. Parents should note that children who have accepted the offer of P1 places in Direct Subsidy Scheme primary schools will

not be allocated P1 places in government or aided primary schools through the P0A System.