

SED on class resumption and Liberal Studies “textbooks”

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session at the Central Government Offices today (August 31):

Reporter: A few English questions. First, what would be the arrangement if students, teachers or even other staff on the campus got infected after campuses are reopened? We understand that senior secondary school kids probably have the ability to take care of themselves. They have good hygiene and it is safe for them go back to school. But is it really safe for some of the kindergarten kids or lower primary kids to go back so soon to school? Second question, around 20 school campuses will be used for the community testing scheme, so what will be the cleaning arrangements for those campuses so they will be safe for reopening and for students to return? Third question, some critics have called the change of content in some Liberal Studies textbooks after a review a political screening, essentially. What is your response to that? Does the Government now consider some protests or political events like June 4 to be something that should not be taught in Liberal Studies classes and something that does not fit the purpose of the curriculum?

Secretary for Education: For the 20-odd campuses that we are now using as testing centres, of course during the course of the testing there will be regular cleansing every day, at least twice every day. As soon as the whole test has been completed, we will carry out very thorough cleansing for the 20-odd government schools. That is being arranged, so that there should not be any concern about the hygiene condition of these schools even after the testing. By the way, the testing itself is pretty safe, so there should not be any particular concern actually. But to make sure that our students and teachers feel comfortable, we decided to do another thorough cleansing upon the completion of the test.

You are right that in terms of self-discipline and self-management, senior secondary students are of course better than junior students or kindergarten students. We always have to balance between the health of the students and the education needs of the students. After the class resumption in May and June this year, we are confident that schools are able to carry on teaching and learning at schools safely. So this time we decided to allow the face-to-face lessons covering the whole spectrum of students, from kindergarten to senior secondary. That of course would require co-operation between the schools, the parents and the students. And under such a large-scale epidemic, I think even our kindergarten students have to learn how to protect themselves against the virus. So I think, back to the schools, I think the kindergartens will also help them develop their ability to look after themselves in terms of, for example, some basic measures such as wearing masks, how to properly wear a mask, washing hands and even drinking

water. All these can be taught at the kindergartens to help them develop very good habits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

We are discussing with the CHP (Centre for Health Protection) on whether we could develop more guidelines for schools to follow. Based on the experience back in May, June and July, there are actually quite a number of scenarios, including teachers or students being confirmed cases or close contacts or their families being close contacts. These are the different scenarios that we are trying to sort out with the CHP and provide clearer guidelines for the schools to follow. But on individual confirmed cases, usually the CHP would need to do an assessment, including what is the scope of contact the student or teacher has encountered, I think, in the past few days. So there needs to be some assessment on a case-by-case basis anyway.

And finally, on the Liberal Studies "textbooks", I would not say it is a political screening. What we do is professionally we look at the "textbooks" already in the market and provide some professional advice to the publishers. And you can see that the publishers adjust the "textbooks" by themselves – some of them maintain some content while others have deleted that. But I think the best way is not to compare the previous one, which the EDB has not made any comments on before, with the present one. I suggest the community look at the current ones and assess whether these "textbooks" are fair, (whether) the information inside is comprehensive, and (whether they) present the actual facts in society. I think these are the key elements that we have to consider – whether they actually facilitate the students' learning. These are all more important than whether one particular incident is included in the "textbook" or not, because in Liberal Studies teachers could have a wide range of topics that they could cover; it is meaningless just to focus on one particular topic, on whether it is included or not. As a matter of fact, I think some of the concepts that are now included in the "textbooks" are much more accurate than before, which is something we are happy to see.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

[Updates on postal services to certain destinations](#)

Hongkong Post today (August 31) announced that postal services to the destinations listed below will resume from tomorrow (September 1) as airlines have gradually scaled up their air traffic capacity and some postal administrations abroad have resumed acceptance of overseas mail. Notwithstanding this, local postal operations are still under the influence of the pandemic and delays in mail delivery are expected.

Destinations		Service types available
North America	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speedpost service • All surface mail postal services
	The United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speedpost service • e-Express service • All surface mail postal services
Central and South America	Montserrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surface mail postal services
Oceania	Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surface mail postal services
	Tuvalu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surface mail postal services

In addition, as advised by the postal administration of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, only surface mail postal services to this destination can be maintained. Due to flight adjustments, all airmail postal services to Ghana, Seychelles and Sierra Leone will be suspended.

Members of the public may visit the web page of Hongkong Post at www.hongkongpost.hk/en/about_us/whats_new/notices/index_id_978.html to refer to the service types currently available for overseas destinations.

[Seventh meeting of Joint Task Force on the Development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Loop held](#)

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, and the Vice Mayor of Shenzhen Municipality, Mr Ai Xuefeng, co-chaired the seventh meeting of the Joint Task Force on the Development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Loop via video conferencing today (August 31).

Both sides received a briefing on the work progress by the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park Limited (HSITPL). Representatives from the Shenzhen Government also introduced the latest development of the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone. Both sides exchanged views on the developments and co-operation of the two innovation and technology parks. The meeting also discussed the work progress of the supporting infrastructure and

endorsed the nominations of the next Board of Directors of the HSITPL.

To facilitate Batch 1 development, the HSITPL commissioned two consultancy studies in mid-2019, namely the technical feasibility study and the economic impact analysis study of Batch 1 development.

As for supporting infrastructure works, the Advance Works of the Loop are in good progress. It is expected that the first batch of land parcels will be available for the Loop by early 2021.

Other officials of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government attending the meeting today included the Permanent Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Ms Annie Choi; the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, Ms Rebecca Pun; and representatives from the Security Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Innovation and Technology Commission, and the Civil Engineering and Development Department.

[Police warn protestors gathering in Mong Kok to leave immediately](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

At about 6pm today (August 30), protestors gathered and chanted slogans on Nathan Road, Prince Edward, which may constitute the offence of “participating in an unauthorised assembly” under the Public Order Ordinance and relevant offences under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation. Police at scene have repeatedly warned participants to stop gathering and leave.

Police are now stepping up patrols and conducting stop-and-searches on suspicious persons in order to prevent and stop crime. Police call upon members of the public to refrain from taking part in unauthorised assemblies and prohibited group gatherings, and to avoid close contact to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

SCS encourages university students to join A0 grade (with photos)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, today (August 31) met with university students participating in the Administrative Service Summer Internship Programme to learn about their internship experience. He encouraged them to apply for the Administrative Officer (A0) Grade after graduation.

Mr Nip said that the Administrative Service Summer Internship Programme has been conducted for years. This year, the number of placements has increased to a record high of 85, offering more opportunities for university students who wish to pursue an A0 career to better understand the work of A0s and get hands-on experience of working in the Government, thereby facilitating their future career planning.

"A0s play a key role in the Government. They are regularly posted to different bureaux and departments to undertake different areas of work in the Government, including assisting in the formulation of public policies, managing the operations of departments, and co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of programmes. In addition to the ever-changing social environment in recent years, Hong Kong has been facing unprecedented challenges in particular over the past year. Nevertheless, civil servants, especially A0s, have always played a pivotal role in the Government and in taking forward various government policies," Mr Nip said.

"Every year we see keen competition in the A0 recruitment exercise. We received over 12 000 applications last year and finally appointed around 30 A0s. The new round of the A0 recruitment exercise will commence in mid-September. I encourage students who are committed to serving the community and the public to actively consider applying for government jobs, including the post of A0, to contribute to society with their knowledge, wisdom and ability."

This year, a total of 85 Hong Kong students studying in local and non-local universities have been posted to 21 government bureaux and departments, taking up duties similar in nature to those of A0s. The participants generally hold the view that the internship programme has enabled them to get hands-on working experience with serving A0s, to see for themselves the Government's operation and the diversity of work of A0s, and to gain a more in-depth understanding of public administration.

