

## SED's opening remarks at media session (English translation) (with video)

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

Good afternoon. Tomorrow is the class commencement day for primary and secondary schools. In early August, the Education Bureau (EDB), in view of the situation of COVID-19 at that time, announced that all schools in Hong Kong should suspend all face-to-face teaching activities upon the commencement of the new school year, but should help students study from home through various modes of learning until further notice. Today, I would like to announce the arrangements for resumption of face-to-face teaching activities.

The EDB has been monitoring the development of the epidemic, seeking health experts' advice, and maintaining close liaison with the school sector. The epidemic has recently shown signs of subsiding, and now we have the basis to allow schools time to prepare for the resumption of face-to-face classes in the second half of September.

Taking into account the experience gained in the phased resumption of classes in May and June, and balancing the learning needs of students and risks in health protection, we have decided to resume face-to-face classes in two phases. The first phase starts on September 23 (Wednesday) – Secondary One, Five and Six and Primary One, Five and Six as well as Kindergarten Three can resume face-to-face classes. The second phase starts on September 29 (Tuesday) – the remaining classes, namely Secondary Two to Four and Primary Two to Four as well as Kindergarten One and Two, can also resume face-to-face classes.

We have taken into account a variety of factors in making the above arrangements. The senior classes' students have better self-care capabilities and have to prepare for public examinations. On the other hand, some stakeholders are of the view that Primary One and Secondary One students, as newcomers, are not familiar with their new school campuses and will need more time to get used to the new learning routines. Thus these students are included in the first phase of face-to-face class resumption. As for kindergarten students, we are more concerned about their self-care capabilities. Kindergarten Three students are better in this regard, and are put in the first phase.

For international and special schools, they will broadly follow the aforementioned timetable to resume face-to-face classes in phases. As the curricula and class structures of these schools are different from those of mainstream schools, they will put in place the actual arrangements in accordance with their respective school circumstances.

Face-to-face classes will be held on a half-day basis for the time being. This is to avoid students having to take off their face masks over lunch so as to minimise infection risk. Schools should not arrange whole-school learning or other activities in the other half of the day. This is to avoid the gathering of a large number of students on campus for the whole day.

The EDB has been communicating with the school sector, and a number of schools have told us that although they have flexibly arranged for students to study at home, some activities, such as orientation, counselling and campus familiarisation classes, are better conducted face to face, and are difficult to be run online. On top of that, after months of class suspension and early commencement of the summer vacation, some classes that have to prepare for public examinations have urgency to return to school campuses to take make-up classes to catch up on progress. In view of this, we recommend that before the first phase of resumption of face-to-face classes (on September 23), schools can, taking into account their school circumstances, consider allowing a small number of students to return to campuses for learning activities for not longer than half a day. The upper limit for each school will be one-sixth of its student population.

I wish to remind everyone that although the epidemic has shown signs of subsiding and activities in the community are gradually resuming, we should not lower our guard. Schools must continue to observe all health precautionary measures. School staff and students have to wear face masks, maintain social distance at all times, ensure good indoor ventilation, avoid gathering of crowds, wash hands frequently and measure body temperature regularly, etc, to ensure that students can study in a safe school environment. The EDB is refining the health protection guidelines used during class resumption before, and will in particular enhance the part concerning what to do when there are cases confirmed on campus and when students and school staff are confirmed with infection or become close contacts. We will issue the updated guidelines to schools shortly to allow time for schools, students and parents to make preparations in advance. I trust that having been through the earlier class resumption, all concerned will stock up on health protection gear, including face masks, hand sanitisers and thermometers. The EDB will provide face masks, including children's masks, to students with financial needs through schools for students' use.

As regards class resumption for cross-boundary students, it involves a number of aspects, including the health protection and anti-epidemic policies between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, immigration control and transportation arrangements. The EDB is actively discussing with other departments and the relevant parties in the Mainland, and will co-ordinate as far as practicable. We will first make arrangements for Secondary Four to Secondary Six students. Before the return of cross-boundary students to Hong Kong, schools will continue to help students study at home through suitable modes of teaching. The EDB will make an announcement when new arrangements are available.

The Universal Community Testing Programme will commence tomorrow

(September 1). I take this opportunity to encourage school staff, students and parents to participate in the testing to protect the health of all school staff and students, and to create more favourable conditions for the upcoming resumption of face-to-face classes.

Finally, I wish to thank school staff, parents and students again for their co-operation and support in adapting the learning and teaching adjustments in the past few months. The epidemic situation may fluctuate in the future. Even though schools can resume face-to-face classes in the second half of September as scheduled and resume normal operation gradually, they may still have to switch to half-day schooling or online learning from time to time in accordance with the epidemic situation. I call on all schools to get prepared for this new normal, remain agile and flexibly deploy suitable modes of teaching. I also appeal to parents and students for understanding and support. School commencement is around the corner. I wish all principals, teachers and parents good health, and all students a healthy and happy school year. Thank you.

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## **Fraudulent website related to Bank of Singapore Limited**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of Singapore Limited on fraudulent website, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

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## **HAD to open temporary night heat**

# shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (August 31) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

## Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall  
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex,  
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre  
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall  
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre  
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

## Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall  
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices,  
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre  
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall  
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre  
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –  
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre  
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –  
Tung Chung Community Hall  
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,  
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –  
Kwai Shing Community Hall  
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –  
Cheung Wah Community Hall  
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –  
Hang Hau Community Hall  
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,  
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –  
Hin Keng Neighbourhood Community Centre  
5 Hin Wo Lane, Sha Tin

Tai Po –  
Tai Po Community Centre  
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –  
Shek Wai Kok Community Hall  
Shek Wai Kok Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –  
Butterfly Bay Community Centre  
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –  
Long Ping Community Hall  
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –  
Tin Yiu Community Centre  
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

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# Primary School Profiles 2020 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 2020 to the Internet on Wednesday (September 2). 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. 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 2021 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](http://www.chsc.hk/primary). 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.

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## Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 31) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From August 23 to 29, four community-acquired LD cases were reported:

1. A female patient, aged 55 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Sheung Chi House, Sheung Tak Estate, Tseung Kwan O;
2. A male patient, aged 82 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Wing Shui House, Lek Yuen Estate, Sha Tin;
3. A female patient, aged 63 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Yiu Ming House, Yiu Tung Estate, Shau Kei Wan; and
4. A female patient, aged 70 with underlying illnesses, who lives in the Bauhinia Serviced Apartments, Central.

"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 August 29 this year, 78 LD cases had been reported. In 2019 and 2018, there were 105 cases each year.

"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 become 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 humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. 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 consumption;
- 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 ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) 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 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 doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device 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  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. 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.