

DH appeals to students to enrol for annual health assessment service

With the commencement of the new school year, the Department of Health (DH) today (September 12) appeals to all eligible primary and secondary school students to enrol for the annual health assessment service provided by the DH's Student Health Service (SHS) in the 2024/25 school year.

The DH's SHS has all along been dedicated to safeguarding the physical and psychological health of students through health promotion and disease prevention services. To identify health problems at an early stage for timely advice and intervention, enrolled students will be arranged to attend a designated Student Health Service Centre (SHSC) to receive a health assessment, individual counselling and health education services. The SHSCs will provide a series of health services to meet students' health needs in different stages of their development, including screenings for health problems related to growth, vision, hearing and scoliosis; physical examinations; psychosocial health and health behaviour; individual counselling; health education and mop-up vaccinations. Students found to have health problems will be referred to the Special Assessment Centres of the SHS, specialist clinics of the Hospital Authority, or other organisations as appropriate for further assessment and management. For instance, in the 2022/23 school year, approximately 13 per cent of primary and secondary school students were referred to optometrists of the Special Assessment Centres for further vision assessments owing to failed vision screening in the SHSCs and other reasons.

Through the efforts of various parties including the Government, schools and parents, more than 417 000 primary and secondary school students attended annual health assessment at the SHSCs in the 2023/24 school year, with an overall attendance rate of 71.3 per cent (up to August 31), which is higher than the level of the 2018/19 school year (69.9 per cent) before the outbreak of COVID-19.

Enrolment for the annual health assessment service of the 2024/25 school year is now open. The enrolment forms have already been distributed to parents/guardians/students through the schools. Parents/guardians/students who have not yet enrolled are urged to enrol through their schools.

To streamline the enrolment procedures and further encourage students' participation, the SHS is piloting the Online Enrolment Scheme (E-enrolment) in the 2024/25 school year. Schools participating in the E-enrolment will provide a unique QR code to their students and parents/guardians to facilitate their access to the online enrolment platform. Currently, a total of 70 schools have participated in the E-enrolment. The DH will review the experience of the E-enrolment and determine the schedule for full implementation of the online enrolment arrangement.

Besides the health assessment service to individual students, the SHS

also assists schools in carrying out school-based health promotion work in a more comprehensive and effective manner. To echo the health-promoting school concept of the World Health Organization, the DH has launched the Whole School Health Programme since the 2023/24 school year, aiming to improve the health of students, school personnel, as well as that of families and other members of the community through schools. The programme covers four themes including physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and social well-being.

Furthermore, to promote students' mental health and empower them to cope with the challenges and difficulties encountered in the new school year, the SHS has released a series of mental health messages and basic life skill tips via the thematic website YouthCan (www.youthcan.hk/en/theme/new-school-year/index.html).

For more information about SHS and enrolment, as well as health tips for students and parents, please visit www.studenthealth.gov.hk/eindex.html.