

“Let’s T.A.L.K. – Child Protection Campaign 2023” kicks off today (with photos)

The Police Force held the opening ceremony of "Let's T.A.L.K. – Child Protection Campaign 2023" today (September 23). Being the third of its kind, the campaign run by the Force in collaboration with the Commission on Children, the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Community Chest and other partners will feature a series of activities this year aiming at raising public awareness of child protection. Last year, the Force jointly set up a task force with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the SWD, and internally established a Vulnerable Witness Support Cadre to enhance the effectiveness of handling child abuse cases.

Addressing the opening ceremony, the Acting Commissioner of Police, Mr Chow Yat-ming, pointed out that there were 716 reported cases of child abuse in the first eight months of this year, representing an increase of nearly 30 per cent compared to the same period last year. One contributing factor is the use of corporal punishment by parents when disciplining their children, and such cases have seen a rise following the full resumption of classes after the pandemic. In the meantime, the collective efforts of the Police, government departments and non-government organisations in enhancing public education and promotion to raise the community's awareness of child protection in recent years have also led to an increase in reported cases.

Mr Chow also highlighted that some child abuse cases were associated with children's online activities. In these cases, abusers established contact with victims through various online platforms, including social media, dating apps and online games. While noting that the legislative work on mandatory reporting of child abuse is nearing completion, the Force is actively working with relevant stakeholders to provide professional training for their personnel, hoping to enhance their investigative and handling capabilities.

Mr Chow reiterated that child protection work requires continuous and concerted effort by all sectors of the community. As such, this year's campaign continues to harness community strength through interdisciplinary collaboration featuring a rich diversity of activities. One of the highlights is the integration of various online elements, including an interactive metaverse exhibition which enables participants to traverse through time and space, reflecting on and envisioning the Child Protection Campaign. A multi-disciplinary seminar will also be conducted to prevent children from falling into the cyber traps.

Additionally, the Force will promote stress relief through sports by organising a virtual parent-child running challenge aimed at setting world records. To expand the network for child protection, the campaign will incorporate cross-sector elements, collaborating with the Community Chest to

organise the Casual Wear Day with the theme of "Child Protection", as well as a social media post design competition to enhance publicity and raise funds for member organisations of the Community Chest that provide child protection and welfare services. Furthermore, the Force will launch a new series of animations and comics covering diverse child protection topics. For more information, please visit the Police's "Child Protection WebApp" (www.ChildProtection.gov.hk).

Other officiating guests of today's ceremony were the Director of Public Prosecutions of the DoJ, Ms Maggie Yang; the Director of Social Welfare, Ms Charmaine Lee; the Chairman of the Dress Casual Day Organising Committee of the Community Chest, Mr Wong Wai-yue; artiste Sharon Chan; the Acting Director of Crime and Security, Ms Chung Wing-man; and the Chief Superintendent (Crime Support), Ms Yu Hoi-kwan.

