

SED on class resumption and kindergarten operation

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 3):

Reporter: A few questions from RTHK. Can we say that this face-to-face class suspension is now indefinite for the time being? And what would you consider when you resume this face-to-face teaching? Would it be in stages as you said in Chinese? And the second question concerns kindergartens, because a large number of kindergarten students may actually drop out of the schools, so do you foresee many kindergartens are closing down from now on? And thirdly, about the Primary Six examination for secondary school admission, what would be the possible arrangement if schools are going to be suspended for quite a long time. Thank you.

Secretary for Education: At this stage, because of the uncertain development of COVID-19 epidemic, it is really difficult to say when normal face-to-face lectures or tutoring or teaching will be allowed. We will closely monitor the development of the epidemic and will give sufficient notice to schools when we think it is appropriate or it is safe for schools to resume the normal face-to-face lectures.

For kindergartens, of course it is also under the same arrangement that there would not be any face-to-face lessons at present. We also encourage kindergartens to arrange some work for the students to do at home, and maybe through some reading or some very simple worksheets, so that teaching and learning will still take place at home. By doing that, I hope parents will see the values of that and will continue to engage their children in kindergarten education. But we will of course closely monitor the whole situation. In the past few months, we have heard there were kindergartens facing great difficulties, so we have implemented a number of relief measures and packages to help them get through. So far we did not see very significant increase in terms of the kindergartens closing down in the past few months. But of course as I said, we will closely monitor the situation. If the Government has to implement other measures to help the whole community as well as different sectors, we will of course consider the impact on the kindergartens and see whether any further relief measures will be necessary.

We are still discussing with the primary schools. On the arrangement for Primary Six examination, as you know, we had deferred the submission of Primary Five examination results to middle of September and further extend to October. At this stage, it is still too early to say what will happen. We still hope that we could have normal classes to resume as soon as possible. But we are making contingency plans. We have already been in discussions with the primary school sector on possible contingency arrangements. But at this stage, we are still discussing with them. We know that it is a very important

examination because it involves the future or the allocation of Secondary One places to students. We will look at it carefully and will try to make sure that the system would maintain as fair and efficient as possible.

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