

# Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley tomorrow

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley tomorrow (February 20). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

## A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

### 1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

### 2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Vehicles from eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

## B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

### 1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

## 2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic arrangements will be implemented from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic on southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

## C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

## D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions

of Police on site.

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## **Office of The Ombudsman announces results of two direct investigations**

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, today (February 19) announced the completion of two direct investigations by the Office of The Ombudsman, namely "Government's support for non-Chinese speaking students" and "Government's handling of two trees in front of Tang Chi Ngong Building of University of Hong Kong.

### **Government's support for non-Chinese speaking students**

With the increase in the number of people of ethnic minorities residing in Hong Kong, the Government has in recent years introduced measures to enhance the support for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students. Nevertheless, there have been criticisms from time to time that the Education Bureau (EDB) has not provided adequate support to cater for the needs of NCS students. In this light, The Ombudsman initiated a direct investigation to examine any inadequacies in the EDB's support for NCS students with a view to making recommendations for improvement.

The scope of this direct investigation covered:

- (1) the EDB's support and relevant measures for NCS students in learning Chinese and for creating an inclusive school environment;
- (2) the EDB's support for NCS children in applying for enrolment in kindergartens (KGs); and
- (3) the arrangements for NCS children in the allocation of Primary One places.

The Office's investigation revealed that regarding its current support measures for NCS students, the EDB should pay attention to and make improvements in the following four areas:

- (1) Support measures for primary and secondary schools should not just be on funding, but require co-ordination of various sectors and encourage school participation: The EDB has started implementing the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework (Learning Framework) and its relevant support measures (Note 1) since the 2014/15 school year. It is necessary for the EDB, the education sector and related stakeholders to accumulate experience and review in a timely manner for further improvement.

Moreover, in the past four school years, an average of 48 primary schools and 31 secondary schools had received support annually, but merely 24 teachers, i.e. an average of six per year, completed the relevant professional programmes. The EDB should step up its efforts in encouraging those schools to actively participate in the School-based Professional Support services. The EDB should continuously sum up the experience in implementing those measures, and strive to improve and enhance the support measures, such as strengthening the support for school administration and teacher training.

(2) The additional funding mechanism for admission of NCS students needs review: Under the current additional funding mechanism, public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme primary and secondary schools that offer local curriculum admitting 10 or more NCS students are granted additional funding ranging from \$800,000 to \$1.5 million per year, while those admitting nine or fewer can only apply for additional funding of \$50,000. The above additional funding mechanism shows that the difference of only one NCS student can mean a difference of 16 times in additional funding to primary and secondary schools.

(3) Inadequate support for KG admission: While the EDB has reminded KGs by such means as circulars and guidelines that they should provide enrolment application forms and other information in both Chinese and English, there have been media reports from time to time that parents of NCS students encountered communication problems due to the language barrier. The Office has looked at the websites of some KGs and found that many of them were all prepared in Chinese. Although some websites provided headings in both Chinese and English, the contents and details under the respective headings were in Chinese only. While the enrolment application form in bilingual format (Chinese and English) was available for download on some KGs' websites, the links to the form were written in Chinese, rendering it difficult for parents of NCS children to find the enrolment application forms on those websites.

(4) Discrepancy between information about Schools on the List and the actual situation: In Annex III to the Notes on How to Complete the Application Form for Admission to Primary One (Note 2), the EDB notified parents of NCS children that the schools on the list ("Schools on the List") in that Annex are "primary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students". In reality, however, certain schools outside the list have currently admitted more NCS students than some Schools on the List. The EDB has not revised the list for years since it was compiled. This may make it impossible for NCS children and their parents to get the picture of the actual situation.

The Ombudsman made the following five improvement recommendations to the EDB:

(1) to conduct prompt and regular reviews on the effectiveness of the Learning Framework, and strengthen the support for school administration and teacher training;

(2) to review the additional funding mechanism and consider increasing the subsidies for primary and secondary schools that admit fewer than 10 NCS students;

- (3) to strengthen the publicity of admission information for NCS children in applying for enrolment in KGs and the communication with stakeholders;
- (4) to actively inspect and check KGs' implementation of the measures promulgated by the EDB, which include the availability of English enrolment application forms and related information; and
- (5) to consider whether to retain or abolish the Schools on the List mechanism.

The Office expects the EDB to continue its efforts in strengthening and enhancing the support for NCS students.

#### Government's handling of two trees in front of Tang Chi Ngong Building of University of Hong Kong

On May 20, 2018, the Lands Department (LandsD) removed two banyan trees located in front of Tang Chi Ngong Building of the University of Hong Kong on Bonham Road in Central and Western (C&W) District. The incident attracted wide media coverage and public debate. Some criticised that there was impropriety on the part of the departments concerned as they had neither taken due care of the health conditions of the trees, nor sufficiently consulted relevant experts and the local community prior to the removal. In this light, The Ombudsman initiated a direct investigation to examine whether the decisions and actions of the LandsD, the Tree Management Office (TMO) of the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD) were in line with the relevant policies and procedures.

The Office's investigation revealed that the decision to remove the trees was made by the LandsD. Meanwhile, the TMO is responsible for assisting the departments concerned to conduct Sensitivity Analysis (Note 3) upon receipt of proposals from tree management departments to remove any old and valuable trees, stonewall trees or trees of particular interest. The HAD plays a supporting role and is responsible for notifying the District Council (DC), under the relevant mechanism, of any decisions to remove trees made by tree management departments, and assisting in local consultations as requested by the departments concerned.

Information showed that prior to its decision to remove the trees, the LandsD had carried out tree maintenance and made six assessments. Assessment results indicated that the health and structural conditions of the trees were deteriorating. Furthermore, the LandsD had explored different mitigation measures such as pruning, application of chemicals, cabling or propping, and even transplanting the trees, but considered that none of them could eliminate the danger of failure of the trees. The TMO agreed with the LandsD's assessments of the conditions of the trees and the feasibility of those mitigation measures. The staff concerned from the LandsD and the TMO have acquired the relevant qualifications and experience in tree management. Together with the tree experts from the Urban Forestry Advisory Panel under the DEVB, they agreed that the trees had shown problems in their health and structural conditions. The trees were in danger of failure, but there were no feasible mitigation measures. In such circumstances, the Office considered

the LandsD's decision to remove the trees not unreasonable from an administrative perspective. Before removing the trees, the LandsD, the TMO and the HAD had also conducted Sensitivity Analysis and notified the C&W DC in accordance with the existing mechanism and procedures.

Nevertheless, in this incident, many people were still surprised and shocked by the removal of the trees. This reflected that the mechanism of Sensitivity Analysis was not entirely effective in achieving its purpose. While the LandsD and the TMO asserted at the relevant committee meeting of the C&W DC that it was necessary to remove the trees and proposed to do so quickly before the typhoon season, they fell short of mentioning the date of the removal works at the meeting. Yet, the removal works were taken three days after the meeting. It came as a surprise to many people. The Office reckoned that had the LandsD obtained all necessary information for determining a date for the removal works before the meeting, and then proposed with the TMO and the C&W District Office at the meeting the date for the removal works with reasons, it would have provided the meeting with prior information for detailed discussion. This would have further increased the transparency of the whole decision making process and predictability of the removal works, and hence better handling of the incident.

The Ombudsman urged the Government to take reference from this incident. When notifying the public about tree removal in the future, it should as far as practicable provide detailed information to the public and stakeholders in an open and accountable manner, so as to further enhance the transparency of its decision-making process.

The relevant investigation reports have been uploaded to the Office of The Ombudsman website at [www.ombudsman.hk](http://www.ombudsman.hk) for public viewing.

Note 1: In the light of the continued increase of NCS students, the Government has in recent years allocated more resources to support them. In particular, additional funding of about \$200 million is earmarked every year to help public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme primary and secondary schools offering local curriculum to implement the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework and its relevant support measures, including creation of an inclusive school environment, enhancement of teacher training in teaching Chinese as a second language, and provision of professional support services for schools.

Note 2: In Annex III to the Notes on How to Complete the Application Form for Admission to Primary One, the EDB remarked, "The EDB encourages parents/guardians to choose schools with an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their applicant children to learn the Chinese language. Having due regard to the aforementioned, in case parents/guardians still consider that their children may have difficulties in an immersed Chinese language environment at this early stage, schools traditionally admitting more NCS students are listed below for reference, in addition to schools in the applicant children's residing school net, when filling in Part B of the Choice of Schools Forms for Central Allocation."

Note 3: The purpose of Sensitivity Analysis is to increase the transparency

of decisions to remove trees, and to address the public's concerns that might arise from the Government's removal of trees.

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## **Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (February 19) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

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## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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## **Make prior work arrangements for rainstorms**

The Labour Department (LD) today (February 19) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff during and after rainstorms.

"To avoid disputes and confusion, employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures during and after rainstorms," an LD spokesman said.

"In working out and enforcing the arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety both in the workplace and during their journeys to and from work, and adopt a flexible approach. Whenever possible, they should consult their staff."

The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- \* Whether employees are required to report for duty when different rainstorm warnings are issued;
- \* How wages and allowances will be calculated for staff who are required to report for duty, as well as those who are late for work or absent from work during rainstorms;
- \* For employees who are required to travel to and from workplaces during rainstorms, whether transport facilities will be provided for them and, if so, the arrangements; and
- \* The time for staff who have not reported for duty to resume work after a rainstorm warning is cancelled, and other relevant arrangements as well as contingency measures.

"Employers should make realistic assessments of the requirements for staff and require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather conditions. If an Amber, Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is issued during working hours, employees working indoors should remain on duty as usual and stay where they are unless it is dangerous to do so. Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should suspend outdoor duties as soon as practicable. They should arrange for their employees to take shelter temporarily and resume duty when weather conditions permit. When the Black Rainstorm Warning is issued, those employees should not resume duty until the warning is lowered and weather conditions permit. If the Black Rainstorm Warning remains in force at the end of working hours, for safety reasons, employers should provide employees with an area in the workplace as temporary shelter for them to stay if they want to.

"If possible, employers should provide transport services for employees who are still required to travel to and from workplaces when the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, or give them a special travelling allowance as encouragement.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work on time upon cancellation of a rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly.

"As rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, employers should not deduct wages of employees who are absent from or late for work because of inclement weather. Neither should employers dismiss an employee summarily based on these grounds," he said.



The spokesman also reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

Employers should not deduct the annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days employees are entitled to under the Employment Ordinance so as to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from employees' failure to report for duty upon the announcement of a Black Rainstorm Warning. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with relevant provisions under the Employment Ordinance is liable to prosecution.

Employers should also note that they have an obligation to maintain a safe workplace for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

"If employees are required to work in times of rainstorms, employers should ensure that the risks at work are properly controlled and reduced to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable," the spokesman said.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for deaths or injury incurred when employees are travelling by a direct route from their residence to their workplace, or from their workplace back to their residence after work, four hours before or after working hours on a day when Typhoon Signal No. 8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

To provide practical guidelines and samples of work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees, the LD has issued the booklet "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms". The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage ([www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf](http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf)).