

LCQ9: Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Ma Fung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, in the Legislative Council today (June 2):

Question:

The Home Affairs Bureau and the Education Bureau have, since the 2017-2018 school year, jointly implemented the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (the Scheme). To encourage schools to participate in the Scheme, schools which open up their school facilities for sports organisations to hold sports programmes will be provided an additional subsidy. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the details of the sports programmes held under the Scheme in (i) the last school year and (ii) the current school year (up to the 31st of last month) (set out separately in tables of the same format as the table below);

School year:

Name of sports organisation	Name of school (District)	Number of programmes	Type of sports	School facilities hired	Number of participants
Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:

(2) of the measures in place to encourage more schools and sports organisations to participate in the Scheme;

(3) given that schools which have hired out their facilities to sports organisations under the Scheme may apply for grants catering for (i) Capital Works Project and (ii) Special Project under the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation (Main Fund), of the respective numbers of schools whose applications for the two grants were approved in the past two school years, and the amount of the grant approved for each school;

(4) of the respective numbers of sports programmes scheduled for the last and current school years under the Scheme which were cancelled due to the epidemic; whether such programmes have been allowed to be postponed to other time slots or the following school year, and whether the schools concerned have been required to return to the authorities part or all of the additional subsidies provided for them under the Scheme;

(5) whether the authorities allow the sports programmes under the Scheme to be held during the partial resumption of face-to-face classes of schools; if not, of the circumstances or conditions under which the authorities will allow such programmes to be held;

(6) of the current number of sports organisations eligible for participating in the Scheme; whether the authorities will expand the lists of such organisations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(7) given that sports organisations participating in the Scheme are required to take out, on their own, insurance with adequate coverage (including third party risks insurance) for the sports programmes to be held by them in schools, whether the authorities will consider afresh collectively purchasing the required insurance or providing an insurance subsidy for such sports organisations so as to increase the incentives for sports organisations to participate in the Scheme; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Education Bureau (EDB) and Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) launched the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (Scheme) in 2017/18 school year to encourage schools to open up their facilities, with a view to enhancing the sporting culture in school. Under the Scheme, sports organisations are encouraged to hold sports activities in schools to provide students with more opportunities to participate in sports and develop a healthy habit of exercising.

The Scheme provides financial incentives to encourage schools to open up their facilities. Apart from levying hire charges, schools that hire out their facilities to sports organisations under the Scheme will receive an extra subsidy up to a maximum amount of \$130,000 from the EDB and the HAB to cover relevant expenses incurred.

To facilitate the cultivation of a strong sporting culture in schools and increase students' participation in sports activities, sports organisations using school facilities under the Scheme are required to reserve one-fourth of the places in each programme for priority enrollment of the students, teachers and/or parents of the school concerned, subject to their fulfilment of the qualification(s) of that activity, if any.

The Scheme has been well received by the sports sector and schools since its launch.

In consultation with the EDB, the consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Ma Fung-kuok is as follows:

(1) The details of the programmes organised under the Scheme in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years are at Annex.

(2) Since the launch of the Scheme, the EDB and the HAB have been collecting feedback from the participating schools and sports organisations of the Scheme at the end of every school year to facilitate the review of the Scheme and implementation of corresponding enhancement measures, with a view to attracting greater participation from schools and sports organisations. The enhancement measures implemented include:

- In the 2018/19 school year, we extended the Scheme from public sector schools to schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme; increased the upper limit of subsidy for each participating school from \$80,000 to \$130,000 a year; and expanded the list of eligible sports organisations;
- In the 2019/20 school year, we allowed non-profit-making organisations with ability, experience and a track record of organising sports programmes in schools and the community to join the Scheme on a pilot basis; at the same time, participating schools were made eligible to apply for the grant under the "Special Project" category of the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation (Fund) for constructing or improving their sports facilities, or purchasing sports equipment;
- Starting from the 2020/21 school year, we allowed participating schools of the Scheme to apply for grant under the "Capital Works Project" category of the Fund to construct new sports facilities; and we gave schools more flexibility in the use of subsidies to replace or acquire equipment/appliances needed, in addition to the permitted use for hiring extra manpower, strengthening security measures, defraying additional utility costs, and carrying out urgent minor repair works in relation to the approved programmes.

(3) In the past two years, a total of 12 participating schools of the Scheme have submitted funding applications for the "Special Project" or "Capital Works Project" categories of the Fund. Applications from seven schools were approved. These schools were given an average grant of \$2.32 million.

(4) In the 2019/20 school year, a total of 143 sports programmes was cancelled due to various reasons including the social unrest and COVID-19 pandemic. As for the 2020/21 school year (as at April 30, 2021), 23 sports programmes were cancelled due to the pandemic. The rest of the affected programmes will be postponed to the remaining part of the school year or the summer holidays.

If an approved programme was cancelled due to the pandemic or other reasons, the sports organisation may liaise with the relevant school to reschedule the programme to another time slot within the school year concerned. If some of the affected programmes could not be rearranged within the same school year, the schools concerned should return the unspent balance of the subsidies as at August 31 every year (i.e. the last day of the school

year) to the EDB.

(5) As the pandemic gradually subsides, sports organisations may hold the sports programmes under the Scheme, while abiding by the infection control and social distancing measures imposed by law.

(6) Currently, the Scheme is opened for national sports associations recognised by the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, and their affiliated club members, district sports associations, sports organisations subvented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and other non-profit-making organisations with ability, experience and a track record of organising sports programmes in schools and the community.

As mentioned in part (3) of the reply, we have extended the eligibility criteria in 2019/20 school year to include non-profit-making organisations with ability, experience and a track record of organising sports programmes in schools and the community. We do not have any plans to further expand the scope of eligible organisations at the moment.

(7) Participating sports organisations of the Scheme are required to take out adequate insurance policy for the use of school facilities, including third party liability insurance, and include the school as the insured as appropriate to ensure adequate protection for staff, property and facilities in the school premises. Given the scale, type of sports, risks involved and numbers of participants of the programmes vary, and that the facilities hired are also different, it is more prudent and practical for sports organisations to procure suitable insurance separately having regard to the nature of the programmes organised.

Update on cluster of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter cases in Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients confirmed to be carriers of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter (MDRA) in medical wards, the spokesperson for Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital gave the following update today (June 2):

In accordance with the prevailing guidelines, the hospital commenced contact tracing and confirmed one more patient, an 84-year-old male, of a medical ward as a carrier of MDRA. The patient is currently under medical surveillance and isolation treatment with stable condition.

Following the activation of the Emergency Response Level in public hospitals, the visiting arrangement for the ward has been suspended. The following enhanced infection control measures have been adopted according to established guidelines:

1. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned;
2. Enforcement of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene for staff and patients; and
3. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation in the ward concerned. The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

[Hong Kong Customs detects money laundering case involving counterfeiting syndicate](#)

Hong Kong Customs mounted an operation today (June 2) and arrested two persons suspected of dealing with proceeds generated from the sale of counterfeit goods and engaging in money laundering activities. The amount involved in the case was about \$5.6 million.

Acting upon intelligence, Customs officers targeted an online counterfeiting syndicate that was suspected of using personal bank accounts to receive payments from the sale of counterfeit goods and participating in money laundering activities. After in-depth investigation, Customs mounted an arrest operation today and raided two residential premises in Yuen Long. Two women, aged 39 and 57, suspected to be involved in the case were arrested for "dealing with property known or reasonably believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence" (commonly known as money laundering) under the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance.

Initial investigation revealed that they had opened personal bank accounts at various banks in Hong Kong and received money from selling counterfeit goods through bank transfer or cash deposits and engaged in money laundering activities involving about \$5.6 million in total between May 2019 and January 2020.

Investigation is ongoing. The two arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Under the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance, a person commits an

offence if he or she deals with any property knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that such property in whole or in part directly or indirectly represents any person's proceeds of an indictable offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment for 14 years while the crime proceeds are also subject to confiscation.

Members of the public may report any suspected money laundering activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

LCQ15: Quarantine arrangements

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (June 2):

Question:

Earlier on, the Government implemented stringent quarantine arrangements for initially confirmed or confirmed cases involving variants of the Coronavirus Disease 2019, including transferring all residents of the buildings concerned to the quarantine centres for a 21-day compulsory quarantine. It has been reported that various problems arose during the evacuations, including that staff members at the scene failed to answer residents as to when they would be transferred to the quarantine centres, calls to the enquiry hotline remained unanswered for a long time, residents had to wait for a prolonged period of time before staff members conducted door-to-door specimen collections for virus testing and arranged their transfer to the quarantine centres, and some residents had not yet been issued quarantine orders a number of days after they had been transferred to the quarantine centres. It is learnt that one of the reasons for the slow evacuation process was the cumbersome procedure for issuing quarantine orders: staff members at the scene took pictures of the personal data of the residents and then sent such pictures to the Contact Tracing Office (CTO) via instant messaging apps; staff members at CTO then performed word processing work, compiled name lists and handed over such name lists to relevant government departments (including the Customs and Excise Department, the Immigration Department and the Hong Kong Police Force) for verification; finally, the quarantine orders prepared were delivered to doctors of the Department of Health at the evacuation spots for issuance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that relevant government departments have held an inter-departmental meeting to sum up the experience gained from the aforesaid operations with a view to formulating measures to improve the arrangements, of the details of the experience summed up and the improvement measures;

(2) of the measures in place to enable staff members at the scene to grasp timely and accurate quarantine information for disseminating to residents who are required to undergo quarantine; and

(3) whether it has reviewed the arrangements for issuing quarantine orders at the evacuation spots; if so, of the review outcome and the improvement measures; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been taking comprehensive and effective measures to combat the COVID-19 epidemic. In general, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) arranges close contacts of confirmed cases to be sent to designated quarantine centres to undergo quarantine. Quarantine helps to cut the community transmission chain as far and as early as possible, and is extremely important in safeguarding the well-being and interests of our community as a whole.

My consolidated reply to the three parts of the question raised by the Hon Starry Lee is as follows:

(1) The Government has been attaching great importance to the safety and quality of food in the quarantine centres. In light of the experience gained from recent large-scale operations, the DH has re-examined the arrangements, including tendering requirements, logistics and meal distribution, regarding the catering provision for quarantine centres with a view to further securing food safety and quality. Taking into consideration the location of the catering service provider, delivery time and arrangement, and the provider's relevant experience on provision of meals for quarantine centres, the DH has engaged Cathay Pacific Airways as the catering service provider for the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC) to provide three meals a day for PBQC starting from May 24, 2021.

Specific provisions outlining the quality required for the catering service provider, including meal variety, portion size, storage temperature and hygiene, were included in the contract. Furthermore, the Civil Aid Service (CAS) will be procuring additional equipment to assist its frontline staff at the quarantine centres in performing their duties, which could further guarantee timely delivery of meals to the rooms of quarantinees.

With regards to the internet connection issue, making reference to the statistics on data usage, the DH will provide free data sim cards with larger capacity to quarantinees. On the other hand, to further improve the wireless network at PBQC, the Food and Health Bureau is proposing the installation of an additional radio base station at PBQC. Consultation with relevant departments on the detailed implementation plan is in progress, and works are expected to commence by June the earliest.

With regards to the maintenance and repair of the quarantine centres, the DH is currently conducting improvement works at PBQC, including retrofitting works on the existing quarantine units with a view to providing more family rooms for families under quarantine. In addition, to further improve the environment at quarantine centres, the Architectural Services Department will carry out improvement works at Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village from June to August 2021. The scope of works includes the installation and improvement of water proofing provisions, renovation of existing facilities.

In response to an upsurge in quarantinees that need to be transferred to PBQC in the large-scale evacuation operations, the Auxiliary Medical Service, the CAS and the DH had immediately deployed additional manpower and supporting staff to cope with and expedite the evacuation process in order to minimise the waiting time. The CAS had also immediately enhanced the hotline support service by increasing the original six hotlines to 16 hotlines to cope with the needs of the quarantinees.

(2) and (3) Close contacts, in general, are sent to designated quarantine centres to undergo quarantine by vehicles arranged by the CHP of the DH. Upon the receipt of information of the quarantinees, the CHP will arrange escorting as early as possible. Notwithstanding this, owing to the large number of evacuees and enormous demand for transportation vehicles in the simultaneous evacuation operation for multiple buildings, challenges were encountered on the transfer of the evacuees. The actual transfer time might also be affected by other factors, for instance, the arrangement for pet-sitting.

Collaboration of different departments, including the District Offices of the Home Affairs Department, the DH and the Hong Kong Police Force are required for evacuation operations. The DH will maintain communication with the various departments to enhance exchange of information, thus ensuring that an accurate evacuee list, number of evacuees and their corresponding quarantine centres could be ready quickly, such that the issuance of quarantine orders and subsequent admission to quarantine centres could be arranged as early as possible. In order to expedite data collection and enhance data accuracy, the DH is studying the use of auxiliary equipment, including identity card readers and QR codes, to enable frontline staff to collect and verify information by electronic means, and input data to the Case Handling and Information Sharing Portal, so as to expedite the evacuation process.

The Government attaches great importance to the quarantine arrangement for close contacts. The DH has deployed additional manpower to cope with large-scale evacuation operations, and will closely monitor the situation and timely arrange corresponding and sufficient manpower for the relevant preparation work. The DH will continue to work closely with relevant government departments to ensure the smooth evacuation and admission of quarantinees to quarantine centres.

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices by fitness centre

Hong Kong Customs today (June 2) arrested a male director of a fitness centre suspected of having wrongly accepted payment in the course of selling fitness services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a male director of a fitness centre in Causeway Bay received payments from consumers during a sales promotion of prepaid personal fitness training packages. The fitness centre was suddenly closed down later and no relevant fitness service or refund has been offered.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 29-year-old man. He has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence if at the time of acceptance of payment, the trader intends not to supply the product or intends to supply a materially different product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).