

**For discussion
on 8 May 2020**

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
School Resumption Arrangements from May to June 2020**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the arrangements for class resumption from May to June 2020.

Background

2. As a result of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), all schools in Hong Kong have not resumed classes since the Chinese New Year holidays. This situation has continued for more than three months by now. The Education Bureau (EDB) has been advocating “suspending classes without stopping learning”. Teachers, parents and students have been making efforts to allow student to continue their learning through different means during the suspension of classes. That said, such mode of learning cannot replace interactive teaching and learning in classrooms. We understand the needs of parents and students, and share the same position as various stakeholders to hope that classes can be resumed under safe conditions.

Resumption by Phases in an Orderly Manner

3. The EDB has been monitoring the development of the situation, and keeping in touch with schools. Having regard to the advice of health experts and views of schools, the EDB considers that schools in Hong Kong are in a position to resume classes by phases in a gradual and orderly manner. In sum, schools will resume classes starting 27 May under a phased arrangement. The class resumption arrangements for various types of schools are described in detail from paragraphs 7

to 17. To minimise the risk of infection during meals, all schools should only provide half-day classes in principle after resumption of classes.

4. There is still a long period of time from now to class resumption, and also from class resumption to commencement of summer vacation. We will continue to monitor the latest developments. We will announce changes to the class resumption arrangements (if any) as early as possible.

Health Protection Measures

5. The consensus of the EDB and the school sector is: the safety of teachers and students have to be accorded a high priority during class resumption, and cautious rather than relaxed measures should be put in place. As such, a series of special health protection measure have to be implemented upon class resumption at schools. We urge all stakeholders of schools, including parents and students, to join hands together and remain vigilant. The aim is to allow all to return to school campuses in a safe condition. Examples of the measures include:

- (a) all students and staff of a school and all visitors to the school must wear masks on school campuses. Students taking school bus, school private light bus or public transports should also wear masks on board the vehicles. All should wash hands frequently to maintain personal hygiene. For this, the school bus industry and nannies should monitor the compliance together with schools;
- (b) body temperature of all students and staff must be taken daily before leaving home and on arrival at school. Those who are sick should not go to school, and should see the doctor and go home to take rest as soon as possible;
- (c) for students who are found having fever or sick after going to school, schools should prepare a place that is separate from other teachers and students for such sick students to rest and wait for their parents to collect them and take them to visit the doctor;

- (d) schools should, as far as possible, arrange students coming to schools and/or leaving schools in separate batches, in order to avoid having large groups of students gathering at the entrances or exits;
- (e) schools should only provide only half-day sessions in principle. This is to avoid students having meals with masks off and inadequate separation distance. Such situation will greatly increase the risk of infection;
- (f) students should maintain a suitable social distance during classes, recesses, activities as well as when queuing for washrooms;
- (g) classrooms should maintain good ventilation. Placement of student seats should make good use of the available space in classrooms so as to maximise separation. Schools will have to suitably adjust their modes of teaching so that students will all face the same direction. Close group discussion amongst students should be minimised. Schools should also avoid non-essential group activities. They may consider using public announcement systems to replace morning and weekly assemblies;
- (h) suitable amount of physical activities will be good for health, but such activities should be conducted in indoor venues with good ventilation or outdoors in non-crowded areas. Single-person activities, such as stretching or jogging, is preferred. Water sports and contact sports activities that require touching a common object, such as table tennis and basketball, should be avoided; and
- (i) if a student or staff member is confirmed to be a case of COVID-19 after resumption of classes, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) will conduct contact tracing. Close contacts will be put under quarantine and other contacts will be put under medical surveillance. The CHP will also advise on how to enhance environmental disinfection in the school. Whether classes at the schools should be suspended will be subject to individual circumstances and professional advice.

The EDB will issue detailed guidelines to schools, listing out all the health protection measures, for schools to follow.

Considerations for Class Resumption

6. Schools will resume classes under three phases in a gradual and orderly manner, with half-day class sessions in principle. The major factors under consideration are the self-care ability of students, the need for public examination preparation, and whether students need to prepare for transferral to the next stage of learning (for example, receiving assessment, selecting subjects and school allocation).

Local Secondary Schools

7. S3 to S5 students will resume classes in the first phase (27 May). Such arrangement will allow sufficient time for schools that are used as examination centres to tidy up and clean their schools after the completion of all written examinations of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). S5 and S4 students will have to complete the learning required by the senior secondary curriculum thus their classes have to be resumed as early as possible. S5 students, in particular, have to have the HKDSE's school-based assessment for some subjects. S3 students will have to complete the year's studies and then select elective subjects for the senior secondary stage of learning. As such, classes of S3 to S5 will be resumed first.

8. Having gained operational experience in the first stage, the classes for S1 and S2 students will be resumed in the second stage (i.e. 8 June).

Local Primary Schools

9. Regarding primary schools, P4 to P6 will have their classes resumed in the second phase (i.e. 8 June), at the same time as S1 and S2.

10. P5 is arguably the most critical learning year for local primary schools. For P5 classes, their second term school examination results will form the 1st Internal Assessment under the Secondary School Places Allocation mechanism. Schools in general prefer to have at least one month of face-to-face teaching time for students before their taking the school examination. P6 is the graduating class. Students spend this year to prepare themselves for progressing to the secondary school stage towards the end of the school year. Regarding P4, the final examination is used by

most schools to determine students' abilities and arrange them into different classes for the next two years.

11. The third phase of class resumption (15 June) will be for P1 to P3. By this stage, the senior primary levels would have resumed classes for one week, and schools can take into account the experience gained in the previous phase and make adjustments to their school-based preparation and strategies as necessary.

Kindergartens

12. For kindergartens, K3 will also resume classes in the third stage (i.e. 15 June) together with junior primary classes. K3 students have a relatively better ability in self-care. These students have to complete their learning at the kindergarten stage and to prepare for the new primary school stage. We could allow K3 students to be back to kindergartens with adequate precautionary measures.

13. Regarding K1 and K2 student, they are of a very young age, and have weak self-care abilities. Since we have to remain cautious in our health protection endeavor, resumption of classes may not be suitable for this group in this school year. Schools should continue to arrange suitable amount of learning for them through other modes.

Special Schools

14. We will implement the class resumption plan for special schools by phases according to the needs of students of these schools. The schools for social development, the school for children with visual impairment (VI) and the school for children with hearing impairment (HI) will follow ordinary primary and secondary schools to resume classes starting 27 May.

15. Special schools for children with mild to moderate Intellectual disability (ID) could resume classes at the second stage (i.e. 8 June). Special schools for children with severe ID, schools for children with physical disability as well as hospital schools will resume classes in the third stage (i.e. 15 June).

Private Schools offering Non-local Curriculum (including International Schools)

16. For private schools offering non-local curriculum (including international schools), their curriculum arrangement, class structure as well as campus and physical environment may differ from those of local schools. Unlike local schools, their school years usually end in mid to end June, and campuses of these schools have not been used as HKDSE examination centres. As such, resumption for primary and secondary classes may start from 20 May by phases in accordance with school-based situations.

Schools Offering Non-Formal Curriculum

17. Schools offering non-formal curriculum (including tutorial schools) will follow the schedule for local primary and secondary schools to resume classes by phases starting 27 May.

Cross-boundary Students

18. In this school year, before the suspension of classes, some 27 000 students living in the Mainland crossed the boundary to go to school everyday. Ideally, they should be allowed to resume their campus lives together with other students. That said, we still have to strictly avoid the spread of COVID-19, and we have to make sure that the health protection work of Hong Kong and the Mainland will not be affected before cross-boundary students can resume their classes. We are discussing with our Mainland counterparts measures to facilitate Hong Kong residents to cross the boundary, but there is no straightforward solution. We will endeavour to identify feasible options. Before there is a way out, we will continue our liaison with schools, and strengthen our support for cross-boundary students. When there is a feasible proposal, we will apply for exemption of compulsory quarantine for cross-boundary students from the Chief Secretary for Administration under Cap. 599C.

19. Members are invited to note the class resumption arrangements for schools from May to June 2020.

Education Bureau

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