



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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14 April 2022

Mr Peter Burnett
Chairman
The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Room 1201 Emperor Group Centre
288 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Dear Peter,

Class Arrangements for International Schools in Hong Kong

Thank you for your letter dated 6 April 2022 to the Secretary for Education relaying the concerns of the international school community about the arrangements for resumption of face-to-face classes after the Easter Holidays. The Secretary has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The HKSAR Government recognises the importance of schooling to children and that apart from learning, physical and social interactions amongst students and with teachers are essential for a child's whole-person development. After the Chief Executive's webinar with the international school community on 2 April, the Government has given due recognition to the views collected and announced subsequently at the Chief Executive's daily anti-epidemic press conference on 11 April the class arrangements after the Easter Holidays.

As you may already know, all primary and secondary schools offering solely non-local curriculum can resume face-to-face classes on 19 April 2022 the earliest, including full-day schooling based on adoption of suitable social distancing and sanitisation measures for lunch arrangements according to the plans as approved by EDB. However, in order to reduce the risks of infections in schools, and especially to protect those children who have yet to be vaccinated, all schools are required to put in place a few precautionary measures. First, all teaching and non-teaching staff as well as persons providing on-campus services are subject to Vaccine Pass except those who could not be vaccinated on medical grounds. Second, all school staff and students are required to undergo daily Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and are only allowed to enter the school with a negative test whereas those tested positive should immediately notify the school and self-declare to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) via a dedicated website; this requirement will last until the latter half of May and thereafter subject to review. Third, students who want to participate in mask-off activities at school or stay at school after lessons for non-academic extra-curricular activities must be vaccinated. We appeal to your member schools to vigilantly implement these measures when schools re-open and continue to make every effort to promote vaccination amongst their students.

Regarding the concern about how positive cases involving staff or students at school would be handled in future, according to CHP, we have made it clear to the sector that class suspension will not be imposed automatically when cases are confirmed. Specifically, if the number of newly reported positive cases reaches 5% or more of the school population (including teaching and non-teaching staff as well as students) on any single day, CHP will initiate prompt investigation and advise on the measures to be put in place to contain the spread (such as thorough sanitisation, ventilation enhancement measures, and an assessment on whether class suspension is necessary). Separately, it should be noted that, in general, only household members of positive cases are regarded as close contacts. Provided that anti-epidemic measures are duly observed in schools, students or school staff who have had contacts with a positive case in schools would not normally be regarded as close contacts.

We have already issued a letter to international schools and other private schools setting out the detailed arrangements on resumption of face-to-face classes. Updated guidelines on the anti-epidemic measures that should be put in place at schools will follow shortly. We trust that the international school community should be well aware of the arrangements and new measures to be put in place.

Separately, we noted that there was also concern about the separation of infected children from parents during quarantine. To this end, we understand that the Hospital Authority (HA) has from 1 April restored the pre-5th wave measures, i.e. to arrange parents or carers who are also confirmed cases to stay in the same ward with the children; and for parents or carers who are not confirmed cases, they could also accompany the paediatric patients with the agreement of CHP. As regards questions about isolation of confirmed cases, we understand that a multi-tiered triage mechanism has been put in place for infected persons to undergo isolation / receive treatment based on the individual's health conditions, living conditions transmission risk within the household, etc. For more information about the multi-tiered triage mechanism, please refer to the electronic leaflet on the Government's COVID-19 website (https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/tips_leaflet.pdf).

As ever, we are most pleased to maintain dialogue with your Chamber and your member schools, and look forward to working together with the sector in maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for our students under the COVID-19 epidemic. Please feel free to contact us if we could be of any assistance.

Yours Sincerely,



(Ms Priscilla To)
for Secretary for Education