

## **Preventing the Spreading of Atypical Pneumonia (AP) in Learning and Teaching Activities**

The Education and Manpower Bureau has issued the *Handbook on the Prevention of the Spreading of Atypical Pneumonia in Schools* on 16 April 2003 for the reference of schools in formulating related contingency plans (<http://www.emb.gov.hk/EDNEWHP/advertisement/English/APhealthadvice.htm>).

Precautionary measures are suggested to ensure that there is provision of a safe teaching and learning environment for staff members and students (Section 2.3). Schools should observe the recommendations and health advice concerning ‘**personal hygiene**’, ‘**environmental hygiene**’ and ‘**other arrangements**’ stated in that section in all learning and teaching activities.

To recap some of the precautionary measures which are applicable to the learning and teaching of all Key Learning Areas (KLA):

- Teachers and students should wear a face mask to prevent infection.
- Cleanliness and ventilation should be maintained in the classrooms and special rooms, or wherever the learning and teaching activities are conducted. Disinfection with diluted bleach should be conducted regularly.
- Objects and equipment frequently touched by students should be wiped and cleaned regularly in diluted household bleach.
- Crowdedness should be avoided in organizing activities within or outside school. Keep the windows open and use exhaust fans to improve ventilation under crowded conditions.

As a supplement to the above, some guidelines specific to the learning and

teaching of the following KLAs for the prevention of the spreading of AP have been prepared for teachers' reference:

### **Physical Education**

- (a) PE lessons should be continued after class resumption to build up students' good body immunity by having adequate and moderate intensity exercises. However, excessive intense exercises that might lead to fatigue and lower students' immune system should be avoided.
- (b) Before the lesson starts, teachers should brief students about the prevention of the spread of AP during PE lessons
- (c) PE teachers should exercise their professional judgments to arrange activities in minimizing body contact of students, e.g. avoid "short distance face-to-face activities".
- (d) Schools should clean sports apparatus, equipment, changing rooms and venues for PE lessons by disinfectant, rinse and dry regularly.
- (e) Teachers should ask students to bring new spare face masks to replace those damaged, stained or dampened during PE activities.
- (f) Teachers should always pay attention to the mental and health condition of students, particularly for students with heart or respiratory diseases.
- (g) Teachers might allow students not to wear face masks at situations where there is enough space among students in a well-ventilated and spacious venue with no "short distance face-to-face activity" being involved.
- (h) Teachers should remind students to bring personal clean and marked containers for storage of face masks. Please refer to the relevant information at HKEdCity regarding the usage of face masks.

- (i) Teachers should remind students to wash their hands properly before and after the lessons. Students should be given sufficient time to wash their hands.
- (j) Teachers should remind students to bring water for personal use, or they might use their own containers to get water from the drinking fountains. Water bottles or containers must not be shared among fellow students.

## **Arts Education**

### *Music*

- (a) Keep all tools/equipment/furniture/musical instruments/props clean.
- (b) Minimize singing and avoid recorder playing activities in music lessons.  
Alternatively, a variety of other music activities can be organized for students, such as:
  - appraising music through listening and/or viewing musical performances from video sources;
  - using percussion instruments to conduct instrumental playing activities;
  - engaging in creative music-making activities through the use of IT, body percussion or classroom percussion instruments;
  - participating in project learning so as to facilitate self-directed learning and cultivate reflective learning; and
  - conducting self-directed music training and activities with the assistance of IT.
- (c) Allow spacious seating arrangement in the Music room.
- (d) Suspend certain extra-curricular activities in music such as wind instrumental lessons and orchestral practices, unless the practice is highly desirable and proper precautionary measures have been taken.

## Technology Education (Conducting Food-related Activities)

- (a) As a temporary measure, school could rearrange the schedule of learning so as to keep the food preparation learning activities to a minimum.
- (b) For all safety precautions school should refer to the “Teaching Home Economics in Secondary Schools – Safety Booklet” *HKED 2002*  
([http://cd.emb.gov.hk/kla/kla.asp?subject=home\\_e](http://cd.emb.gov.hk/kla/kla.asp?subject=home_e) )
- (c) If learning activities on food preparation have to be conducted, **special attention** should be given to the following:

### *Ensuring Clean Environment*

- Before starting food preparation activities, school should ensure that all work surfaces and utensils in the special rooms (Home Economics Rooms, Workshop for Accommodation & Catering Service and Catering Services) are cleaned and sterilized including:
  - ◆ Food contact surfaces, e.g. work table, chopping board, food preparation equipment and utensils;
  - ◆ Hand contact surfaces, e.g. handles of doors, refrigerator, drawers and cupboard;
  - ◆ Easily contaminated items, e.g. waste bins, cloths and mops
- Detergent and hot water could be used to wash cooking and serving utensils. Afterwards, they should be immersed in boiling water (100°C) for one minute for disinfection.
- Chemical disinfectants, such as diluted household bleach water could be used for cleaning areas such as work surface and floor. Rinse the areas with water thoroughly after cleaning.
- Ensure that the drainage system is unblocked and disinfected regularly with

diluted household bleach water.

- All food ingredients and utensils must be stored and covered properly to avoid contamination.
- Change dish cloths and kitchen cloths after each lesson. They could be disinfected by soaking in 1:99 diluted bleach for 30 minutes.
- Provide liquid soap and paper hand towel for the special rooms.

#### *Promoting Personal Hygiene*

- Wash hands regularly:
  - before preparing food
  - after touching raw meats
  - after visiting toilet
  - after coughing or blowing the nose
  - after handling refuse
- Put on clean protective clothing.
- Keep cooked food covered.
- Do not talk, sneeze or cough over cooked food.
- Use a clean spoon for tasting.
- Avoid sharing of food from the same plate and with the same spoon.

### **Science Education**

- (a) Schools should temporarily stop all science learning activities that require students taking off their face masks, such as experiment to compare the composition of breathed and unbreathed air, experiments involving the use of taste etc.

- (b) Equipment and Apparatus

Equipment, apparatus and personal protective equipment (e.g. safety spectacles)

should be properly disinfected before use.

(c) Laboratory work

In laboratory, teachers, students and laboratory technicians should follow the “Health Advice on the Prevention of Atypical Pneumonia” – wearing face masks all the time, and washing hands thoroughly before and after science experiments. At the same time, science teachers and laboratory technicians should also refer to chapters 14-18 of the handbook on *Safety in Science Laboratories* (2002) ([http://cd.emb.gov.hk/sci/laboratory/safety/SHB\\_2002e.pdf](http://cd.emb.gov.hk/sci/laboratory/safety/SHB_2002e.pdf)) and exercise care and good judgement in safeguarding students and themselves against possible infection of SARS.

(d) Dissection of Rats

- There is no evidence of transmission of SARS from rats to human up to this moment. However, teachers and students should be very cautious in dealing with live specimens. Special attention should be paid to the safety measures stated in the guideline for animal dissection. As an alternative to rat dissection, examining models and preserved specimens, as well as viewing audiovisual materials can serve similar purpose.
- A-Level Biology teachers should note that HKEAA has amended the requirement for experience in rat dissection in the A-Level Biology Teacher Assessment Scheme for the 2004 Advanced Level Examination. Other than rat dissection, candidates could use an alternative vertebrate (e.g. a fish or frog) to replace rat in the dissection due to personal reasons.