

PRESS RELEASE

2020 HKDSE Commences in Late April with a Series of Precautionary Measures

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) announced today (15 April 2020) that the 2020 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) written examinations will commence on 24 April 2020 according to the recently released [examination timetable](#).

Starting from 16 April, the revised admission forms will be distributed to school candidates and private candidates. Candidates are reminded to take the examinations on specified dates at designated examination centres accordingly. They must also present the original admission forms received in early March for check-in and identification.

In order to safeguard the health of candidates and examination personnel, following the recommendations from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), a series of precautionary measures will be implemented at examination centres (*Annex 1*). These include requiring all candidates and examination personnel, before entering the examination centres, to wear surgical masks, clean their hands with alcohol sanitizer, have their body temperature checked and make health declaration. Anyone who has fever or acute respiratory tract infection symptoms (such as coughing, shortness of breath, etc.), or is in mandatory quarantine, shall not enter the examination centres.

According to the CHP's latest advice, transmission of COVID-19 can occur through close contact and use of toilets. Thus, candidates are required to put on their surgical masks properly and should not talk with others during the sessional break. To prevent crowding, candidates will be arranged to go to an open area designated by the centre schools as appropriate, and more toilets will be made available for candidates and invigilation staff during the sessional break.

During the HKDSE examinations, if there are any confirmed cases of COVID-19 infection among candidates or examination personnel, the CHP will conduct follow-up investigation and arrange their close contacts to undergo mandatory quarantine, and other contacts will undergo medical surveillance. The HKEAA will follow the advice of the CHP and contact the affected candidates and examination personnel as soon as possible. The examination centres concerned will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before continuing the examinations.

For candidates who cannot attend the examinations due to illness or other special circumstances, the HKEAA may consider giving an assessed mark (applicable to all candidates who are able to sit at least one written paper for the subject concerned) or an assessed subject result (only applicable to school candidates) to the candidate concerned upon application with medical proof or supporting documents.

The practical examinations of Physical Education (PE) will be held from late May to mid-June. Since candidates cannot wear surgical masks during the practical examinations, based on CHP's advice, a distance of at least 2m will be kept between candidates. Taking into account the assessment arrangements of different physical activities, the safety of candidates and examination personnel and closure of some examination venues, the following assessment components will be cancelled:

- Physical Activity 1: Application of Basic Skills and Tactics in a Game Situation for Badminton / Basketball / Football / Volleyball / Table Tennis / Handball
[Individual basic skills assessment will be held]
- Physical Activity 2: Athletics / Gymnastics / Swimming
- Physical fitness: 1609m run/walk
[Sit-ups, Sit and Reach, Pull-ups (male)/ Flexed Arm Hang (female) assessment will be held]

With the cancellation of certain components of the practical examination, candidates still have to sit the individual basic skills assessment of Physical Activity 1 and Physical Fitness. Weighting of the PE practical examination remains at 40% of the subject, with Physical Activity and Physical Fitness each carrying 20%.

Aiming to release the HKDSE results by the end of July, the HKEAA will streamline the marking and grading procedures and extend the opening hours of its assessment centres for onscreen marking. To ensure the health and well-being of markers, a series of precautionary measures will be implemented at the assessment centres (*Annex 2*), such as setting up partitioning screen between the workstations or spacing out workstations at a distance of at least 1.5m, setting up Thermal Imaging Systems (TIS) for body temperature checking, etc.

This year, about 4,300 markers will be needed for marking the HKDSE. We would like to call on markers to complete the marking on time in accordance with the marking schedules.

In response to the concerns from candidates and the school community, the HKEAA and the Education Bureau have consulted representatives of secondary schools and the tertiary education sector and developed a comprehensive contingency plan. If examination arrangement has to be further revised, such as deferring or cancellation, the HKEAA will announce the details soonest, with due consideration to the extent of the outbreak and advice from health experts.

For enquiries, please contact the Public Examinations Information Centre (Hotline: 3628 8860; email: dse@hkeaa.edu.hk) during office hours (Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 5:30pm).

–End–

Date: 15 April 2020

Annex 1: Contingency and Precautionary Measures at Examination Centres (Updated on 15 April 2020)

The HKEAA is implementing a series of contingency and precautionary measures, based on the recommendations of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), during the examination to ensure the health and well-being of candidates, examination personnel and all involved in the administration of the examinations. Candidates should pay attention to the following important points when taking the examinations:

Before leaving for the centre

1. Candidates must check their body temperature, complete and sign the 'Candidate's Declaration Form on Health' on each examination day. The declaration forms (one form per day) have been distributed to candidates together with the admission form. *[Note: The declaration form has been updated according to paragraph 3 below but candidates should continue using the hardcopy forms distributed to them in March.]* Candidates making false, incomplete or misleading declaration may receive penalty or even be disqualified from the Examination.
2. According to the advice of the Department of Health, candidates with the following conditions should **not** go to the examination centre but consult a doctor promptly:
 - (1) Fever (body temperature at or higher than 38°C), regardless of the presence of acute respiratory tract infection symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath;
 - (2) No fever but with the presence of acute respiratory tract infection symptoms.
3. Candidates are required to declare that they are not undergoing mandatory quarantine on the day of examination; otherwise they should **not** go to the examination centre.
4. No supplementary examination will be arranged for written or practical papers. Candidates who cannot attend any written or practical examinations due to illness should follow the instructions given in [Section D4 of the 'Handbook for Candidates'](#) which were uploaded on the HKEAA website in December 2019.
5. Candidates are reminded to take their body temperature on each day, and bring their completed 'Candidate's Health Declaration Form' and surgical mask(s) to the examination centre. *[Note: Sufficient surgical masks (one per examination day) have been distributed to school candidates via their school and private candidates.]*

Before the examination

6. Schools should maintain good indoor ventilation and environment clean and disinfected. The CHP has issued health advice (including personal hygiene, maintaining environment clean and hygiene, etc.) to schools for the prevention of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (Interim). For details, please refer to the relevant website:
www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/advice_to_school_on_prevention_of_nid_eng.pdf
7. The majority of centre schools will set up body temperature screening at the entrance of the examination centres. Before entering the written examination centre, candidates must put on their own surgical mask properly (with the nose, mouth and chin fully covered) and rub their hands by using alcohol sanitizer-gel of their own or placed in front of the entrance. Schools may also put disinfectant floor mats sprayed with bleach at the entrance of the examination centres. Invigilators will check on the spot whether candidates have completed and signed the 'Candidate's Declaration Form on Health', and they will take the body temperature of those candidates whose body temperature is at or higher than the alert level of the screening system with a forehead thermometer and then an ear-type thermometer. If necessary, candidates may rest a while before re-taking their body temperature. The reading of the ear-type thermometer should be taken as final. Candidates who have fever will be required to leave the examination centre and consult a doctor promptly. **The above procedure will be strictly enforced by the centre staff.** In addition, candidates should raise their awareness of epidemic prevention in the examination centres and should avoid talking with others.
8. Schools may admit candidates earlier **from 7:50 am** for examinations due to start at 8:30 am. Candidates who have completed the procedures of body temperature taking and health declaration should be allowed to enter the examination hall/room unless there are designated waiting areas for the candidates. If necessary, the Centre Supervisors may exercise their discretion to postpone the start of examination by 15 minutes for the 1st examination session and 30 minutes for the 2nd examination session. However, it should be noted that on 29 April and 5 May where the English Language and Chinese Language Listening and Integrated Skills are examined respectively, the radio broadcast of the examination content cannot be delayed and will start at 10:00 am sharp. In order to ensure that the listening component of the language subjects will proceed smoothly and as scheduled, candidates must strictly abide by the requirements in points 1 to 3 above and report to the examination centre on time, **by 8:30 am.**

During the examination

9. According to the advice from the CHP, spatial separation of seating arrangement should be adopted in hall and classroom centres for written examinations. The Education Bureau also announced that schools will continue to suspend classes until further notice. Schools would optimise the use of their school premises in a bid to space out candidates in the examination

centres as far as practicable. The distance between the seats of candidates should be at least 1 metre, and be widened to the ideal 1.8 metres as far as possible. Candidates may be relocated to examination rooms other than the ones specified on their admission form. For Listening examinations, candidates being assigned to centres using infrared transmission (IR) system or PA system (for Chinese Language (Putonghua)) may be relocated to classrooms where PA system or other device will be used for playing the recording. In this connection, they should check the latest seating arrangement when they arrive at the examination centre.

10. In written examinations, candidates are required to put on a surgical mask properly and should not remove it. Those who refuse to put on their surgical mask will be regarded as having breached the examination regulations. Invigilators may wear latex gloves during the distribution of question papers, attendance taking and collection of answer scripts. Invigilators may ask candidates to remove their surgical mask temporarily during the taking of attendance in order to verify their identities. In case any candidates would like to be exempted from wearing surgical mask during the examinations, they should apply to the HKEAA with medical proof or acceptable reasons on/before 13 March 2020 for further arrangement. The HKEAA will not accept any such request on the examination day.
11. Candidates with serious sneezing/persistent coughing may be arranged to sit at the reserved seats of the examination hall or another examination room in order to minimise disturbance to other candidates. Candidates who need surgical mask may ask for help from the centre staff.

During the sessional break

12. Candidates should put on their surgical mask properly, wash their hands with liquid handwash regularly and should not talk with others during the sessional break. They should go to the open areas (and should avoid going to the crowded areas) designated by the centre school as far as possible. Schools are advised to make available their toilets as many as possible on various floors for use by candidates and invigilation staff during the sessional break for dispersion of crowds. Schools should pay attention to the gender distribution of the candidates being allocated to the centre on individual examination days.
13. To prevent crowding of candidates during the sessional break, candidates should be arranged to leave the examination room or go to the toilet in batches. Candidates should space out while queuing up outside toilets to prevent overcrowding.
14. Candidates have the duty of keeping the centre school premises clean, particularly when using the toilets.
15. Schools are reminded to supply/refill liquid handwash and clean the toilets regularly. They should disable the use of hand dryers (if any) and should not use air blowers for drying the

floor inside toilets. If possible, schools may assign their janitors or cleansing staff to station in the toilets to carry out rapid cleaning during the sessional break. Please put up a notice to remind candidates that they should put the toilet lid down after use before flushing. In addition, schools with drinking fountains should discontinue the provision of such facility in the school premises. Schools should put up suitable notices/posters to remind candidates to observe personal hygiene e.g. wearing a surgical mask, washing hands with liquid handwash regularly, maintaining social distancing during the sessional break, etc. Sample notices/posters will be provided by the HKEAA to examination centres for reference.

Candidates fall sick during the examination (fever / vomit)

16. If a candidate is unwell, he/she can summon an invigilator or request a sick bag (provided by the HKEAA), and will be accompanied to the toilet or other location of the school, such as the medical room (if any) for rest. If necessary, the school can call an ambulance to send the candidate for medical treatment. The invigilator may request to take the body temperature of the candidate again. If the candidate is found to have fever, the invigilators will ask the candidate to go home and consult a doctor as soon as possible. The HKEAA would give an assessed subject result to school candidates according to the stipulated procedures.
17. Handling pollution such as blood, secretions or vomit, etc.:
 - a. The centre schools should follow the recommendations of the CHP and the proper procedures to arrange their cleansing staff to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including surgical mask, latex gloves, disposable gown, eye protection (goggles/ face shield) and cap (optional) for initial cleaning and disinfection. *[Note: The HKEAA had provided surgical masks, latex gloves and other epidemic prevention materials to the examination centres and will distribute a small number of disposable gowns and eye protection (face shields) for use by the centre staff as and when necessary].*
 - b. After completion of the above procedures, schools should dispose of all waste and cleaning utensils (such as pliers, wipers or mop heads) in a waste bag.
 - c. Carefully remove the PPE and dispose it in the waste bag and then clean the hands immediately.
 - d. Wear new gloves, properly wrap the waste bag and dispose it in a covered rubbish bin. Mark the rubbish bin and put it in an undisturbed and safe place for collection#.
 - e. Carefully remove the gloves and wash the hands with liquid handwash and water.
 - f. Schools should record the quantity of disposable gowns used in case replenishment is needed in future.

If the case is confirmed to be Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the CHP will notify the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to send staff to collect the waste as soon as possible. Otherwise, the CHP will notify the school to dispose of the waste as usual.

After the examination

18. At the end of the examination, candidates should follow the instructions of Centre Supervisor in leaving the examination centre in batches, so as not to crowd the exits.

19. Schools should clean and disinfect the examination centre facilities daily before each examination day/after the examination sessions by using 1:99 diluted household bleach (or 70% alcohol for metal).

Confirmed cases of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) during examination period

20. According to the advice of the CHP, if any candidate or invigilation staff who has stayed in the examination centre is subsequently confirmed to have COVID-19, the CHP will commence epidemiological investigations and conduct tracing investigation to confirm whether there are close contacts to follow up. The centre school should disinfect all potentially contaminated surfaces or items by using 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water). If there is blood, secretions, vomitus or excreta spillage, disinfect with 1:4 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 4 parts of water), wipe from the outside inward, leave for 10 minutes, rinse with water and wipe dry afterwards. The centre school should arrange their cleansing staff to wear appropriate PPE including surgical mask, latex gloves, disposable gown, eye protection (goggles/ face shield) and cap (optional). The HKEAA will provide PPE to each centre school for use in case of an incident. For proper wearing and removing the PPE, please refer to the CHP's video (www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/32975.html). After completing cleansing and disinfection, the examination centre can be used for another examination. If necessary, the HKEAA will endeavour to transfer candidates to another reserved examination centre in the same district and notify the affected candidates by email and SMS via mobile phone as soon as possible.

Points to note for household members of confinees

21. The Department of Health issues 14-day compulsory quarantine orders to all persons (except exempted persons) who have travelled outside Hong Kong. For household members of confinees, there is no requirement of compulsory quarantine. However, household members of confinees are advised to take heed of measures including avoiding going to crowded places, wearing a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places, maintaining good personal hygiene, etc. Details can be found at CHP website: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Points_to_note_for_household_members.pdf

Annex 2: Precautionary Measures in HKEAA Assessment Centres

- All workstations for onscreen marking will be partitioned by a 1.2m-tall screen and located in a ventilated area. If the workstations are not set up to face in the same direction, there will either be a partitioning screen between them, or a distance of at least 1.5m between the workstations.
- All markers, examination personnel, HKEAA staff and other visitors must wear surgical masks in the assessment centres. They also have to perform hand hygiene, have their temperature checked and declare their health status at the entrance checkpoint. Alcohol-based hand rub will be provided by the HKEAA. To cope with the large number of markers using assessment centres, Thermal Imaging Systems (TIS) have been set up to expedite temperature checking.
- As of 25 March 2020, people who have travelled outside Hong Kong will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Markers, examination personnel and visitors having a fever, showing symptoms of acute respiratory tract infection (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) or under compulsory quarantine will not be allowed to enter assessment centres.
- Staff of the assessment centres will remind markers, examination personnel and visitors to take extra care of their personal hygiene, including the sneezing and coughing etiquette, how to wash hands and wear a surgical mask properly, etc.
- More frequent and thorough cleaning of workstations will be arranged, especially of devices or areas exposed to human touch (such as keyboard, mouse, desk, chair etc.) Cleaning frequency will range from two to four hours depending on the frequency of human touch in different areas. Alcohol wipes will be provided to markers who would like to clean the desk, keyboard or mouse themselves. The hygiene of toilets and communal areas in the assessment centres (such as the break area) will also be improved.
- Care should be taken to avoid gathering in break rooms. Toilets use should be monitored so as to avoid overcrowding.