

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR NO. 4/2016

**Tropical Cyclones and Heavy Persistent Rain
Arrangements for Kindergartens and Day Schools**

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors and heads of all **kindergartens** and **day schools** - for action
- (b) Heads of all Sections - for information]

SUMMARY

The purpose of this circular is to inform schools of the arrangements to be implemented under inclement weather conditions. This circular supersedes the Education Bureau (EDB) Circular No. 6/2015 dated 18 May 2015 on the same subject.

DETAILS

2. The content of this circular relates to the safety of students and school staff. All schools are required to comply with all the arrangements and act accordingly.
3. These arrangements apply in the event of:
 - (a) tropical cyclones and heavy persistent rain; and
 - (b) change of weather conditions at the time of public examinations.
4. Special attention is drawn to the different arrangements in the event of tropical cyclones and heavy persistent rain. It takes time for tropical cyclones to form and change and the effects are more lasting. Upon EDB's announcement of class suspension in case of tropical cyclones, schools should arrange students to return home under safe conditions. For heavy persistent rain, however, adverse situation could develop quickly and dissipate quickly. Schools should therefore continue their lessons as usual when RED/BLACK Rainstorm Warning Signal is issued during lesson time and should not arrange students to return home immediately. (Please refer to paragraphs 6 and 8 below for details of the arrangements.)

Tropical Cyclones

5. Schools should pay attention to the announcements made via the radio, television or mobile application “GovHK Notifications” when tropical cyclones are affecting Hong Kong. For full details of the announcements, schools may visit the webpage “Press Releases” on the Government website (<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/today.htm>).

6. When tropical cyclones affect Hong Kong, the following general arrangements will apply and EDB will make appropriate public announcements accordingly¹:

Weather conditions	Corresponding measures
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 1 is issued	✧ All schools, including kindergartens, are to operate as usual unless advised otherwise.
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 is issued*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Classes of kindergartens, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with intellectual disability are to be suspended. ✧ Other schools are to operate as usual unless advised otherwise.
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal Pre-No. 8 / No. 8 or above is issued*	✧ Classes of all schools are to be suspended.
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is replaced by Signal No. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Classes of all kindergartens, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with intellectual disability are to remain suspended. ✧ Unless previous announcement has been made to the effect that classes will be suspended for the entire day, other schools are to resume if Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal 3 has been issued before 5:30 a.m. (for AM and whole-day schools) / 10:30 a.m. (for PM schools).
When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 is replaced by Signal No. 1 or when all tropical cyclone signals are cancelled	✧ All schools are to resume with the next session unless previous announcement has been made to the effect that classes will be suspended for the entire day.

¹ Schools may visit the EDB website (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/>) for full details of the announcements. According to section 85A of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), schools may conduct educational courses or give instructions on a general holiday. In this connection, EDB will make public announcements during holidays where appropriate.

- * If students have already set out for school when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 is issued, kindergartens, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with intellectual disability should activate the contingency plan to ensure that school premises will be open and arrange staff to look after the students who have arrived at school, until proper arrangements are made for such students to return home at an appropriate time under safe conditions. The same applies to all schools if the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal Pre-No. 8 / No. 8 is issued when students have already set out for school².

Heavy Persistent Rain

7. The rainstorm warning system of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) is designed to alert the public to the occurrence of heavy rain and the likelihood of major disruptions, including serious traffic disruptions, as well as extensive floods and landslips resulting in casualties. Schools should pay particular attention to the announcements made via the radio, television or mobile application “GovHK Notifications” during rainstorms. For more detailed information regarding rainfall distribution, schools may visit the following HKO webpage:

<http://www.hko.gov.hk/wxinfo/rainfall/isohyete.shtml>

8. In the event of rainstorms, the following general arrangements will apply and EDB will make appropriate public announcements accordingly:

Rainstorm Warning Signal	Corresponding measures
AMBER	✧ All schools, including kindergartens, are to operate as usual unless advised otherwise.
RED or BLACK	
(i) Issued from 5:30 am onwards and before 6:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Classes of AM and whole-day schools are to be suspended all day. ✧ Students who have not left for school should stay home. ✧ Schools should implement contingency measures and arrange staff to look after the students who might arrive and ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.

² The Permanent Secretary for Education or his delegated authority will give a written permission under section 83(6)(a)(ii) of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) to those school staff and students who need to enter or remain in their school premises during the period of suspension due to operational need or safety reason. The issue of the written permission will be announced in the EDB website together with the public announcement of class suspension.

Rainstorm Warning Signal	Corresponding measures
(ii) Issued from 6:00 am onwards and before 8:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Students of AM and whole-day schools do not have to attend school that day. ✧ Students who have not left for school should stay home. ✧ Schools are required to keep their premises open and implement contingency measures to look after students who have arrived at school. ✧ If students learn about the class suspension announcement on their way to school, they should decide whether to proceed with their journey to school taking into consideration the rain, road, slope or traffic conditions. ✧ Students who have already arrived at school should remain in school until it is safe for them to return home. ✧ Parents do not need to pick up their children from school immediately.
(iii) Issued from 8:00 am onwards and before 10:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ AM and whole-day schools should continue the lessons until the end of normal school hours and ought to ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.
(iv) Issued from 10:30 am onwards and before 11:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Classes of PM schools are to be suspended. ✧ Students of PM schools who have not left for school should stay home. ✧ AM and whole-day schools should continue the lessons until the end of normal school hours and ought to ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.
(v) Issued from 11:00 am onwards and before 1:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Students of PM schools do not have to attend school that day. ✧ Students of PM schools who have not left for school should stay home. ✧ PM schools are required to keep their premises open until the end of normal school hours and arrange staff to look after the students who have arrived at school. They ought to ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.

Rainstorm Warning Signal	Corresponding measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ If students learn about the class suspension announcement on their way to school, they should decide whether to proceed with their journey to school taking into consideration the rain, road, slope or traffic conditions. ✧ Students who have already arrived at school should remain in school until it is safe for them to return home. ✧ Parents do not need to pick up their children from school immediately. ✧ AM and whole-day schools should continue the lessons until the end of normal school hours and ought to ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.
(vi) Issued from 1:00 pm onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ All schools should continue the lessons until the end of normal school hours and ought to ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.

“Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories” and “Announcement on Localised Heavy Rain”

9. A “Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories” (SAFNNT) will be issued by HKO whenever heavy rain affects the northern New Territories and flooding is expected to occur or is occurring over the area. Once issued, the announcement will be disseminated through different channels immediately, including the radio, television, HKO’s website and mobile App “MyObservatory”. Schools in the northern New Territories should assess their own vulnerability to flooding based on the past experiences and decide whether class suspension is required when SAFNNT is issued. If schools consider that it is necessary to suspend classes, they may proceed after consulting their respective School Development Sections / Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres. Schools are also required to inform all school staff, students, parents and relevant parties of the decision and related arrangements.

10. HKO is expected to introduce the “Announcement on Localised Heavy Rain” in July. When heavy rain occurs in other individual areas and the rainfall does not reach the criteria to issue Red or Black Rainstorm Warning, HKO will issue the “Announcement on Localised Heavy Rain” with reference to recorded rainfall. The affected areas and the amount of rainfall recorded will be indicated in the