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, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref.: EDB(SD_CT)ADM/20/05/1(1) 電話 Telephone: 2892 5782

來函檔號 Your Ref.: 傳真 Fax: 2892 6304

18 April 2008

To: Supervisors/Principals of all Kindergartens,
Kindergarten cum Child Care Centres, Secondary, Primary and Special Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

Prevention and Control of Influenza
Guidelines for Using Drinking Fountain in Schools

"Expert Group on Investigation of Flu Deaths in Children" has released its report on the acute febrile deaths in three children during the 2008 seasonal influenza outbreak. On the aspect of public health, the Expert Group has made a number of recommendations. It advised that "direct drinking of water from drinking fountains by young children at schools should be discouraged because backwashing of oral and nasal secretions onto the water outlets may cause cross-infection".

Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health has issued "Guidelines for Using Drinking Fountain in Schools" listing out a number of precautionary measures to be adopted by schools. Young children are discouraged from drinking directly from the drinking fountain and individual drinking cups should be used. Besides, all drinking fountains shall be kept in sanitary condition. It should be cleaned regularly with detergent and water during normal cleaning procedure. A copy of the Guidelines is enclosed for school's follow-up action.

For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers/Pre-primary Services Officer.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Michelle WONG)
for Secretary for Education

Guidelines for using drinking fountain in schools

1. Precautions for Users:

- Children using the fountain should not come in direct contact with the orifice guard.
- Young children are discouraged from drinking directly from the drinking fountain. Individual drinking cups should be used.
- When individual disposable cups are supplied by school, there shall be a suitable container for the unused cups and also a receptacle with cover for disposing of the used cups.
- Expectorating upon the drinking fountain is prohibited.

2. Routine Maintenance:

- All drinking fountains shall be kept in sanitary condition. It should be cleaned regularly with detergent and water during normal cleaning procedure, especially the orifice guard and the pressing button.
- If visibly soiled, the fountain should be cleaned immediately with diluted bleach solution (1 to 99 household bleach solution), and rinsed with clean water afterwards. For metal surface, 70% alcohol is an alternative to diluted bleach solution.
- It is important to maintain the fountain in a functioning condition with an angle jet and a lip guard to ensure the water stream is in sufficient volume and height to be directed and projected so that users cannot contaminate it.
- Drinking fountain should be refrained from use if any leakage, backflow of water or blockage is present.
- School should ensure that the filter inside the drinking fountain should be changed according to the manufacturer's instruction.