



THE HARBOUR SCHOOL
Unlocking the best

March 17, 2021

[For Immediate Release]

[Government policy on quarantine and isolation for families a step in the right direction]

MARCH 17, 2021 HONG KONG - The Harbour School welcomes the Hong Kong government's clarification of its [policy](#) for quarantine and isolation arrangements involving children as a positive step in the right direction.

The school has, in the last 72 hours, been advocating for a compassionate approach to quarantine and isolation arrangements for children as events over the last week have resulted in 35 of its students being identified as close contacts by the CHP and hence subject to 14-day isolation at government quarantine centres. Potentially, another 70 students could be identified as closed contacts by CHP and also taken into quarantine.

The new guidelines directly impact the 35 Grade Three students ages 8 to 10 years identified as close contacts by CHP on Sunday, March 14, after a member of faculty was tested positive with Covid-19 on Wednesday, March 10. The teacher attended Ursus gym which has been at the centre of the latest outbreak.

On March 13 and 14, two other faculty members who work closely with the first member of staff were tested positive. Whilst all students and teachers were wearing masks at all times, the 35 students were nevertheless considered close contacts and must serve quarantine.

Under the CHP's Mandatory Testing Order, all students who have been tested have had a negative result. 34 of the 35 students have been tested to date, and one remaining student was unable to take a scheduled test yesterday due to being



taken into government quarantine. (416 students and staff at the school have also tested negative with others pending results.)

Yesterday afternoon, 9 students of the 35 were taken into hotel quarantine at the Dorsett Kwun Tong. They were allowed to be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. The remaining 26 students are expected to be taken into quarantine today. The students will be able to leave quarantine on March 23, 2021.

The school and families of the 35 students first learned of CHP's decision to take the children into quarantine via a televised broadcast of a CHP press conference on March 14. Neither school nor the families were notified prior to the press conference.

"We appreciate the urgency and high-stress nature of the CHP's job in keeping Hong Kong safe. Because of CHP's tireless efforts, we do not live in fear in Hong Kong. Going forward, I would urge the CHP to communicate in a timely manner with school so that families are notified in advance in order to ensure minimal distress," said Daniel Blurton, THS managing director.

On March 16, the government explained its policy that "close contacts in general are defined as those who have stayed or lived with the patient, or had face-to-face contact with a case without wearing a mask."

"Under certain circumstances, such as at an outbreak situation where two or more confirmed cases are found within the same premises, or within an environment with higher risk (e.g. playing sports, doing exercise or staying in the same classroom or school hall for an extended period of time), contacts even if wearing a mask could also be considered as close contacts."

The school is appreciative of the clearer guidelines delineated by the government with evident consideration for the well-being of children.



“We are grateful that the CHP has accommodated the need for children to go to hotel quarantine. All children needing to serve quarantine should have their rights respected and hotel quarantine is a positive outcome. In explaining its policy on quarantine and isolation arrangements for children, the Hong Kong government seeks to alleviate the anxieties that so many families in Hong Kong have due to the possibility of being separated from their children should either parent or child be tested positive or is identified as a close contact and have to serve a 14-day quarantine in a government facility. The Harbour School sees this as a really positive step in the right direction,” said Mr Blurton.

Under the newly clarified guidelines, the school is particularly encouraged by the following points:

- Taking into consideration on a case-by-case basis whether there are special needs.
- Allowing one parent or caregiver to accompany children under 18 to be quarantined in a government quarantine centre.
- Allowing families with children with special needs to quarantine together in a government facility.
- Allowing parents, providing they test negative, to accompany their child who is being treated at a public hospital.

Dr Jadis Blurton, THS Head of School said, “Those of us who have families or friends in other countries worry not only about their physical safety but also their economic and psychological health. Hong Kong has led the world in managing a “middle road” policy that allows for strict adherence to safety measures at the same time as good sense is applied to the important social and emotional health of its citizens. The current provision of hotel quarantine for the families of young children is an excellent example.”



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Apart from the three reported cases, no other member of staff and no students have tested positive. Under the CHP's Mandatory Testing Order, the school is to ensure that every person who was on the Grove campus at 332, Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road for more than two hours from February 28 to March 10 undertake a Covid-19 test within 72 hours from Saturday, March 13. The status of the results is made available [here](#).

Unless otherwise directed, the school may open on campus instruction on March 25. All three of the school's campuses in Kennedy Town and Ap Lei Chau have been thoroughly and professionally cleaned and certified by [Electro Hygiene Solution](#) (Click [here](#) for photos and certification). All students and staff returning on site will have to test negative.

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Ends
7.30AM