

## **EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO 206/2004**

From : Secretary for Education and  
Manpower

To : Heads of All Schools in Hong Kong

Ref : EMB(SD)ADM/50/1/1

Date : 30 August 2004

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### **Prevention of Mosquito-transmitted Diseases and other Communicable Diseases**

#### **Summary**

According to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Ovitrap Indices, which reflected the prevalence of the mosquito vector for Dengue Fever, have declined substantially in June and July from their high levels in May. However, the Area Ovitrap Indices recorded in a number of locations remained at alarming levels. Schools should continue to be vigilant over the hygienic conditions of their campus during this wet season. Schools should also remind staff and students to maintain good personal hygiene to prevent other communicable diseases.

#### **Details**

#### **Prevention of Dengue Fever and Other Mosquito-transmitted Diseases**

2. In the Education and Manpower Circular Memorandum No.123/2003 issued on 27 May 2003, schools were strongly advised to set up anti-mosquito patrol teams to inspect the school environment at least once weekly and to refer to the “Weekly Mosquito Inspection Programme for Schools” recommended by FEHD in eliminating mosquitoes. In view of the extensive distribution of mosquito vector for Dengue Fever in certain locations, schools are reminded to implement the “Weekly Mosquito Inspection Programme for Schools” and conduct inspections regularly to remove potential breeding places for mosquitoes. Schools are also reminded that it is the responsibility of the school management to take every necessary step to ensure that the school premises and their environment pose no threat of mosquito breeding and that the highest code of hygiene is observed.

3. General precautionary measures against mosquitoes are at the Annex. Schools are invited to visit the websites of the Department of Health (DH) and FEHD at <http://www.chp.gov.hk> and <http://www.info.gov.hk/fehd/index.html> respectively for further

information.

4. Regarding responsibilities of schools relating to the prevention of Dengue Fever, please refer to the Education and Manpower Bureau Circular Memorandum No. 326/2003 issued on 2 December 2003.

5. If schools need any expert advice on mosquito control or report any mosquito black spots being found in the schools' vicinity, please contact the FEHD Hotline at 2868 0000.

### **Prevention of SARS and other Communicable Diseases**

6. Although Hong Kong has stood down the SARS Alert Level since 28 May 2004, to prevent the resurgence of SARS, schools should remain vigilant and maintain good environmental hygiene while staff and students should be reminded to maintain good personal hygiene at all times. In the new school year 2004/05, parents will not be required as a matter of routine to record the body temperature of their children and hand in the temperature record sheet to the school everyday. However, as a general precaution, students should be advised to consult a doctor and stay home if they have fever, or do not feel well.

### **Reporting Suspected Cases**

7. For suspected cases of mosquito-transmitted diseases or communicable diseases, schools should contact the newly established Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch, the Centre for Health Protection of DH at Tel: 2477 2772 or Fax: 2477 2770.

8. The Circular Memorandum No. 164/2004 issued on 25 June 2004 is hereby superseded.

**K S LEE**

for Secretary for Education and Manpower

c.c. Heads of Sections – for information

**Prevention of Mosquito-transmitted Diseases**

1. Dengue Fever is a disease caused by dengue viruses. The viruses are transmitted to humans through mosquito bites. There is no person-to-person spread. The mosquito *Aedes albopictus*, a vector known to transmit the disease, can be found in Hong Kong. The mosquito likes to bite people during daytime, especially two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset. Symptoms include high fever for three to five days, severe headache, muscle and joint pain, eye pain, nausea, vomiting and skin rash. In severe cases, it may cause bleeding, shock, and death to the patients. Children normally would have milder symptoms than adults.

2. Japanese encephalitis is transmitted by Culicine mosquitoes living mainly in rural areas. The mosquitoes breed in water logged fields and marshes. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache, vomiting, drowsiness, seizure, or fear of light.

3. The best way to avoid mosquito-transmitted diseases is to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes and avoid mosquito bites. In this connection, schools are requested to remind staff and students to take the following precautionary measures recommended by the Department of Health (DH) and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD):

- Put all used cans and bottles into dustbins with cover;
- Change water for plants at least once a week, leaving no water in the saucers underneath flowerpots;
- Cover tightly all water containers, wells and water storage tanks;
- Keep all drains free from choke;
- Top up all defective ground surfaces to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water;
- Wear long-sleeved clothes and long trousers when going outdoors;
- Use insect repellent over the exposed parts of the body;
- Use mosquito screens, nets and trappers where appropriate; and
- Report to FEHD on any mosquito black spots being found in the schools' vicinity at 2868 0000.

4. To ensure that the school premises are clean and do not have any mosquito breeding grounds, schools are strongly advised to set up anti-mosquito patrol teams to inspect the school environment at least once weekly. A proforma downloaded from the website of the FEHD ([http://www.info.gov.hk/fehd/safefood/mos\\_weekly/schools.rtf](http://www.info.gov.hk/fehd/safefood/mos_weekly/schools.rtf)), advising schools to

conduct the “Weekly Mosquito Inspection Programme for Schools” in eliminating mosquitoes is attached for reference. Please note that schools may be prosecuted for allowing the breeding of mosquitoes as stipulated in the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132).

### Weekly Mosquito Inspection Program for Schools

Week/Date Problems	1 <sup>st</sup> Week	2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	4 <sup>th</sup> Week	5 <sup>th</sup> Week	.....	n <sup>th</sup> Week
	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
1. Presence of garbage that might collect water							
2. Stagnant water in choked gullies, sand traps etc.							
3. Stagnant water in flower pot saucers							
4. Mosquito larvae in flower vases							
5. Stagnant water in containers							
6. Stagnant water in disused tyres							
7. Stagnant water in trays underneath refrigerators and air-conditioners							
8. Stagnant water in tree holes and bamboo stumps							
9. Stagnant water on uneven floor							
10. Others							
Name of Inspector							
Signature							

**Remarks:**

- Management of schools may design their own inspection program to meet specific needs
- Inspection personnel should be assigned to carry out weekly inspection. If mosquito or potential breeding places for mosquitoes were found, immediate and appropriate follow up actions should be taken, including:
  - ◆ Remove stagnant water
  - ◆ Dispose of garbage properly
  - ◆ Cover water containers properly, and keep empty containers upside down to avoid collecting water
  - ◆ Fill tree holes, bamboo stumps and uneven ground with sand, mud or cement
  - ◆ Remove garbage and fallen leaves from gullies to avoid choking
  - ◆ Wrap up disused tyres properly or punch the tyres with large holes
  - ◆ Remove water in flower pot saucers and change water in flower vases at least once a week