

15 June 2005

Education Bureau Circular No. 7/2005
(Formerly referred as EMB Circular No. 7/2005)

School Holiday List and Student Learning Time

[Note: This circular should be read by:

- (A) Supervisors and Heads of all Schools - for necessary action*
- (B) Supervisors and Heads of English Schools Foundation Schools and International Schools – for information]*

Summary

This circular reminds schools to include the general holidays gazetted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in their proposed list of school holidays to be submitted to the respective Chief School Development Officers by 15 August each year. When drawing up the school calendar, schools should also ensure that students are provided with adequate learning time.

Details

2. The general holidays as announced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region are specified by the Education and Manpower Bureau as school holidays, in accordance with Regulation 82 of the Education Regulations (Cap. 279A). Details are accessible at the on-line Government Information Centre at http://www.info.gov.hk/info/holiday_e.htm, normally from late April onwards. Schools can exercise some flexibility over the number and distribution of school days to suit the specific needs of the students and the circumstances of the school. Relevant recommendations are stated in paragraph 4.

3. School Supervisors are requested to comply with Regulation 79 of the Education Regulations (Cap. 279A) and to submit a proposed list of holidays for the coming school year to their respective **Chief School Development Officers** in the form of a school calendar before 15 August each year. They are also requested to ensure that the proposed list of school holidays is approved by the School Management Committee and has the support of parents. Regulation 79 of Cap 279A reads:

"The Supervisor shall send to the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower before 15 August in each year notice of all holidays it is intended to give in the coming school year, including any special holidays given in honour of any particular event, and of all dates on which the usual work of the school be suspended."

4. In drawing up the school calendar, schools should consider the interests of students, teachers and other stakeholders and bear in mind that the quality of learning and the maximization of learning time are equally important. Primary and secondary schools should also take the following points into special consideration:

- ♦ For public sector schools, the number of school holidays, which should include public holidays, shall be 90 days a year, with three additional discretionary holidays.
- ♦ To be consistent with the recommendation of the Curriculum Development Council stated in the Basic Education Curriculum Guide prepared in 2002, there should be no less than 190 school days for whole-day schools and 209 school days for bi-sessional primary schools in a school year.
- ♦ Schools should adopt measures to maximize student learning time. For example, avoid spending too much time on tests and examinations and put more emphasis on "Assessment for Learning".

- ◆ It is advisable to discuss the arrangements for school-based staff development days and the number of discretionary holidays among different stakeholders, where feasible. The dates and occasions of discretionary holidays, as well as the duration and the intended dates of school-based staff development days should be stated clearly in the school calendar as far as possible. If the school cannot fix the exact dates for staff development days at the very beginning of the school year, the information on the number of such development days and whether or not students need to attend school should also be given in the calendar.

5. To facilitate drawing up the school calendar, information about the general holidays in the 2005/06 school year, the calculation methods of school holidays and school days as well as a sample of a whole-day school calendar is accessible at the Homepage of the Curriculum Development Institute at http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/calendar_e. Primary and secondary schools should also refer to the information stated in Item 7 of Key Performance Measures for School Development and Accountability (KPM) concerning the number of active school days. Details are accessible at <http://svais.edb.gov.hk/kpmweb/eng/Framework.htm> under the “KPM Framework”.

Enquiry

6. For enquires, please contact your **Senior School Development Officer**.

Dr. K K CHAN

for Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower

c.c. Heads of Sections and the English Schools Foundation - for information