



# Severe Weather and Air Quality Policy (Internal)

## 1. Introduction

Hong Kong can be subject to a number of severe weather conditions which may affect school operations. The guidance below is intended to ensure the safety of the school community at all times. The rainy season in Hong Kong usually runs from April to September and in severe weather conditions the School adheres to official public announcements from the Hong Kong Observatory and the Education Bureau.

## 2. Rainstorm Warnings

2. 1 An **Amber Alert (Amber Rain)** - all teachers are required to come to work at the normal time. Students should not be taken off-site for activities (unless to a designated venue and the teacher in charge of that activity has checked in advance of departure that the destination is still accessible and open). Sports and other outdoor activities on-site may continue, with the teacher in charge exercising due caution and bringing the students inside if appropriate.
2. 2 A **Red Alert (Red Rain)** No activity should go off-site, unless deemed essential by the School and sanctioned by SLT, due to the potential danger of travelling. All activities on-site should be indoors. If the Red Rain Alert is raised after 2pm, pupils will be available to be collected. Parents should contact the US or LS Office in the case of any issues with collection.
2. 3 A **Black Alert (Black Rain)** All staff and students should remain indoors. Staff living off-site are not required to come to site if a Black or Red Rainstorm warning is hoisted before the School day starts; they should expect to be asked to work from home (including online teaching) and should be contactable by phone or email. They may be expected to return to work on that day, if the signal is lowered; an email will be sent out to all staff if this is the case, with details of any transport arrangements that may be put in place.

## 3. Thunderstorm Warnings

3. 1 If a **Thunderstorm Warning** is in place, students should not be taken off-site for SCAs or CCAs due to the possibility of getting caught in a major storm whilst out (unless to a designated venue and the teacher in charge of that activity has checked in advance of departure that the destination is still accessible and open).
3. 2 Sports and other outdoor activities on-site may continue, even if it is raining. However, if lightning is visible or within 10km of school, staff must exercise caution and move activities inside until it is safe to return.

## 4. Typhoon Warning

4. 1 **Typhoon Warning Signal 1:** if a Typhoon warning signal of 1 is raised, school and activities will continue as normal.

## 4. 2 Typhoon Warning Signal 3:

- 4.2.1 If a Typhoon warning signal of 3 is raised before the school day begins, the Early Years Centre will close, but all other sections of the school will operate as normal. The Early Years staff are still required to come to work at the normal time.
- 4.2.2 If a Typhoon warning signal of 3 is hoisted during the school day, the Early Years Centre will close and all the children will go home. However, the EYC staff will remain at work until the end of the working day. Those pupils who go home on buses will still be able to use this service as the bus provider will provide the necessary transport within 2 hours of the signal being hoisted. EYC staff will cater for teachers' children in the Early Years Centre.
- 4.2.3 Sports and other outdoor activities may continue, even if it is raining, however, no activity should go off-site, unless deemed essential by the School, due to the potential danger of travelling.

#### **4. 3 Typhoon Warning Signal 8 – signal raised before school day:**

If a Typhoon warning signal of 8 or above is raised before the start of the school day, all staff living off-site do not need to come to site; they will be asked to work from home (including online learning) and should be contactable by phone or email. Day pupils will remain at home and all CCAs and off-site trips will be cancelled. A programme will be put in place for boarders. Meals will still be taken in the dining room (if safe). If pupils have already set off for school and it is unsafe for them to return home, the School will supervise them until it is safe to return home.

#### **4. 4 Extreme Conditions:**

The 2-hour period immediately following the cancellation of Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 (T8), is considered 'Extreme conditions'. All employees are advised to stay in the place they are currently in, or in safe places, for that two-hour period and await further advice from the Government as to whether the 'Extreme conditions' will be extended or cancelled. If this designation is cancelled, and it is safe and possible for staff to return to work, and it has been requested by the School, they should return to work within two hours i.e. if T8 is cancelled at 8am, then 'Extreme conditions' will be in force from 8-10am. Assuming that 'Extreme conditions' is not extended by the Government, staff should return to work by 12.00 noon. Staff living on-site are considered 'Essential Staff' and will all be required to help with the supervision and coordination of any boarders or pupils remaining at the School during adverse weather or when 'Extreme conditions' are in force.

#### **4. 5 Typhoon Warning Signal 8 – signal raised during school day:**

If a Typhoon Warning signal of 8 or above is raised during the school day, all day pupils and staff living off-site will go home. Lessons, SCA and off-site trips will be cancelled. Boarders will return to Houses and be looked after by their HMs, AHMs and resident duty boarding staff. Non-resident staff are not expected to stay. If the Hong Kong Observatory announces that T8 will be raised during the course of an evening, House Masters and House Mistresses should make sure that non-resident duty staff are released in good time so that they have the means to get home safely in bad weather. All other resident staff will help in the dispersal and supervision of the Lower School and Upper School Day pupils (as the LS staff will also need to leave to go home) as directed by the HMs or members of the SLT.

#### **4. 6 If a signal is raised on Sunday:**

If a signal is raised, or in force, on a Sunday this will have an impact on the boarders' return. If a T8 or black/red rainstorm is in force at 4.00pm on Sunday afternoon, all boarders' buses will be cancelled. If the T8 or black/red rainstorm is lowered before 8.00pm and there is enough time for boarders to travel to School by car or taxi, and arrive safely before 8.00pm, they should do so. If the T8 or black/red

rainstorm has not been lowered by 8.00pm, the School will remain closed and no boarders should attend that evening. All boarders will be expected to arrive at School with the Day pupils by 7.45am on Monday, assuming that the T8 or black/red rainstorm has been lowered. Pupils living in Macau may find this difficult and will not be penalised for arriving late to School, as long as their respective House Master or House Mistress has been informed.

## 5 Very Hot Weather

5.1 When the 'Very Hot' warning has been issued, sensible precautions should be taken, but the students can still do games and activities outside. Where possible, they should wear hats and sunscreen (taking into account the appropriateness for each individual sport). Additionally, frequent water breaks should be given if playing games / sports outdoors to ensure the students remain hydrated.

### 5.2 Heat, Humidity and Air Quality

5.2.1 Staff should check any hazardous weather and assess whether the sporting activity can proceed or be cancelled, or be adjusted to accommodate for the prevailing weather. Please see below:

5.2.2 Staff should use the observatory app to ascertain the Relative Humidity and temperature.

5.2.3 For activities on astro-turf, the actual temperature will be approximately 5°C hotter than the surrounding air, so due caution should be applied. Decisions on outdoor activities in hot weather should be made taking into consideration the age and ability of the pupils, as well as the scale below, which considers Relative Humidity and Air Temperature.

5.2.4 Relative adjustments for hot weather may involve cancellation, reducing excessive exertion, shade, headgear, sunblock, appropriate sports clothing, and appropriate fluids made available and other control measures as appropriate.

RH %	28C	29C	30C	31C	32C	33C	34C	35C	36C
50	28.4	29.7	31	32.6	34.4	36.3	38.4	40.7	43.1
60	29.4	31	32.8	34.8	37.1	39.5	42.2	45.1	48.1
70	30.7	32.7	35	37.6	40.4	43.5	46.8	50.3	54.2
80	32.1	34.7	37.7	40.9	44.4	48.1	52.2	56.5	61.2
90	33.7	37.1	40.7	44.7	49	53.5	58.4	63.7	69.2
100	35.6	39.7	44.2	49	54.2	59.7	65.5	71.7	78.2

### Take Care

- Educate students on signs and symptoms of heat stroke.
- Modify activities to suit abilities of students.
- Monitor students regularly.
- Encourage students to drink fluids and wear appropriate kit

### More Caution - In addition to above:

- Schedule classes to involve breaks. During breaks, monitor students to ensure they rehydrate.
- Plan activities to limit over-exertion.
- Consider modifying activities to maximise use of shaded/indoor areas.

### Danger - In addition to above:

- Heat Exhaustion likely with prolonged exposure.
- Limit exposure to short periods of non-intensive activities.

#### **Heat stroke likely.**

- Sunburn likely (especially for swimming).
- Do not proceed with outdoor or off-site physical activities whether in the shade or not.
- Use indoor facilities only.

### **6. Transport Arrangements in event of school closure**

- 6.1 Parents may choose to pick up their children from School if they do not wish to use the bus, but should adhere to times outlined by the School.
- 6.2 Pupils using buses will be let off at their usual stop. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that someone is at home in these circumstances.
- 6.3 Pupils will not be sent home on buses once a Typhoon Signal 8 or above has been raised. Children may only leave with a parent or designated responsible adult before the signal is lowered if a parent requests this of the School. Please note that the HK Government strongly advises that everyone should stay indoors during a Black Rainstorm warning. We do not advise parents to drive or send someone to pick up their children when a Black Rainstorm warning has been raised.

### **7 Lowering of signals:**

- 7.1 When a typhoon signal is lowered to Signal 3 (or Signal 1 for Early Years) or all signals are cancelled before 6.00am, the School will open on the next School day.
- 7.2 There will be instances where parents should use their discretion in deciding whether or not to send their child to School, after considering local weather, road, slope and transport conditions at that time. Please note that pupils will not be penalised for not coming to School or being late under these exceptional circumstances.

### **8 Closure of Individual Schools in Individual Districts:**

May announce the closure of schools or the suspension of classes in Tuen Mun. All lessons will cease and teachers living onsite will supervise boarders. If weather, road, slope, traffic or transport conditions warrant the closure of the School and the Secretary for Education has not made an announcement to close schools generally, Harrow Hong Kong may close and then notify the District Education Office concerned as soon as possible. The announcement will be made, wherever possible, before pupils set out for School. Again, the School will take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of pupils who may have missed the announcement and come to school.

### **9 External Examinations:**

External examinations will continue as scheduled for boarders in all weather conditions. For day pupils the following guidelines apply:

#### **9.1 T3 Signal or Amber Rainstorm Warning**

If this is raised before the start of the School day, or during the day, examinations will continue as normal.

#### **9.2 T8 Signal or Red/Black Rainstorm Warning**

If this is raised before the start of the school day and pupils are, therefore, unable to travel, the pupil will have to miss the examination. The School will apply for special consideration but there is no guarantee that an application will be successful. If the application is unsuccessful, the pupil will have to re-sit the

examination in the next available session. The School advises day pupils to sleep with friends or family who live close to the School if a T8 signal or Black/Red Rainstorm warning is forecast (or to stay the night at School, if a boarding space is available).

- 9.3 **If the signal is raised during the school day**, the examinations will continue as normal and students will return to their House to be supervised until the signal is lowered and it is safe for them to return home.

## **10 Air Quality**

- 10.1 Air Pollution is a fact of life in Hong Kong that requires the close attention and vigilance of the School. The level of pollution is measured hourly by the Environmental Protection Department. The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) will be monitored by the School Receptionist, taking readings from the Tuen Mun monitoring station. SLT, the Assistant Head (Early Years) and the Director of Sport will be notified when the pollution reaches AQHI Band 7 or above.
- 10.2 Special consideration will be given to those children with heart, respiratory or chronic illnesses who must reduce their activity when level 7 is reached and stop when level 8 is reached. The School's Health Care Centre provides a list of those who suffer from these conditions. Staff will check that pupils have their medication before commencing exercise.
- 10.3 The School follows the EDB's guidelines on air pollution, as below, with the following clarifications:

### **Level 8:**

- EYC pupils are to be brought inside; the same arrangements as for 'wet break' will be followed.
- Ball games should stop for Upper School or Lower School pupils in leisure time (break, lunch, after school, after prep)
- No outdoor activities for EYC students. All Lower School & Upper School matches/fixtures are cancelled.
- All competitive matches should stop. If the evidence over the course of the day suggests that the reading will reach 8 or above, the other school should be contacted at least two hours before the match is played to make them aware that the match may be cancelled. The decision to cancel should be taken as early as possible and communicated to parents.

### **Level 9:**

- Lower School pupils are to be brought inside; the same arrangements as for 'wet break' will be followed.
- No outdoor activities for Lower School pupils; PE and outdoor activities will be held indoors where possible
- All competitive practices stop for Upper School students; the sessions may continue but must be skills-based.

### **Level 10:**

- Upper School students are to be brought inside. Students return to Houses outside of normal lesson times.
- All outdoor activity stops and sessions are moved inside. Swimming may continue until the AQHI reaches Level 10+.

### **Level 10+:**

- If the reading reaches 10+, an announcement will be made telling all students to go inside. If this happens during a break, the same procedure as for a 'wet break' will be followed.
- All sporting activities, both indoors and out, will be cancelled.
- The PE department, where possible, will run theory sessions but if the numbers are too great, students will return to their Houses.

## **11 External Providers for SCAs and CCAs**

All external providers, whether operating onsite or offsite, will follow the School's guidelines. If the reading reaches level 8, the Deputy Head (Deputy Head Co-Curricular and Organisation) or Director of Sport will contact the providers to ask them to reduce the level of physical activity, to move the activity inside or, if it reaches a 10+, to run a theory session instead. If the external provider is not able to accommodate this request, the activity will be cancelled and the parents contacted.

## **12 Expeditions/Residential Trips**

12.1 Staff taking activities or camps within Hong Kong should take School policy into account when planning their activities. If an AQHI Level 8 is reached, the trip leader should consider the following:

12.1.1 Delay the most strenuous activities and rearrange them for a morning when the pollution levels are generally the lowest

12.1.2 Do a less strenuous activity or exercise more moderately

12.1.3 Reduce the activity duration and/or include more rest breaks.

12.2 Trip Leaders should monitor air quality at all times. If the pollution level reaches 10, all outdoor activity should stop. If an external provider is being used the trip leader, before the trip departs, should ensure that they are also monitoring pollution levels and have a contingency plan in place should pollution reach a level where an activity may not take place.

## **13 Trips of one day or less**

13.1 Day trips that involve physical activity should follow the guidelines for AQHI levels 8-10 above. If the trip is based outdoors, pupils should be moved inside when the reading reaches level 10. Outdoor trips should be cancelled at 10+.

13.2 If the trip is based indoors, such as a trip to the theatre, a gallery or a museum, these may continue at all AQHI levels. If the trip involves some physical activity indoors (e.g a visit to a climbing wall) this should stop at 10+.

**Owner: Principal Deputy Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing)**

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