

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR NO. 5/2020

Designating the Day after Election as a School Holiday

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors and heads of all schools offering formal curriculum - for action
- (b) Heads of all Sections - for information]

Summary

The purpose of this circular is to inform all public sector, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) and private schools offering formal curriculum (including secondary schools, primary schools, kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres) that the Permanent Secretary for Education invokes regulation 82 of the Education Regulations (Cap.279A) to designate the day following a major public election (in this circular, it refers to the Legislative Council general elections and District Council ordinary elections) as a school holiday, and to elaborate on the arrangements of school holidays in case the election has to be held on a fallback day.

Background

2. School premises play an important role in major public elections. In each major election, nearly half of the polling and counting stations have been set up in school premises of different types, including secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens. With the continuous surge in new registered electors and voter turnout, in the elections held in recent years, the school premises could only be returned in the next morning after an election for some polling stations. Consequently, the normal operation of some schools was affected, and hence quite a number of schools were unable to lend out their school premises as polling and counting stations.

3. To minimise the impact of public elections on schools' operation, and facilitate the smooth operation of major public elections, the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) has proposed to the Government that the day after the elections to be designated as a school holiday. Having consulted the school sector, the Education Bureau (EDB) has decided to put in place the EAC's proposal.

Details

4. Starting from the 2020/21 school year, all schools offering formal curriculum, including public sector, DSS and private secondary schools, primary schools, kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres, should designate the day after a major public election as a school holiday.

5. In accordance with Education Bureau Circular No. 7/2005 "School Holiday List and Student Learning Time", when schools draw up their school calendars, the number of school holidays of public sector schools, including public holidays, should be 90 days a year with three additional discretionary holidays. To tie in with the arrangement of designating school holidays on the days after elections, there will be 91 school holidays in the election year of a Legislative Council general election and a District Council ordinary election.

6. If there is a postponement/adjournment of major public elections based on the relevant electoral legislation (due to a typhoon or other climatic condition of a serious nature, or any danger to public health or safety, etc.) before the major public elections or during the polling/counting of votes, resulting in the rescheduling of the entire/part of the election, polling and/or counting of votes to the fallback day, the Chief Executive/EAC/Presiding Officers (whoever is applicable) will announce the fallback date (in general, the Sunday immediately following the original election day) in accordance with the relevant electoral legislation. Under such situation, the arrangement of designating the school holiday after the original election day will remain unchanged. It is recommended that schools with their premises serving as polling and counting stations on the fallback day should arrange the day after the fallback day as a school holiday. Schools should, taking into account their school-based circumstances, obtain the approval from the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC)/School Management Committee (SMC) and inform parents and students of the relevant arrangements as soon as possible.

7. According to the prevailing practices, schools should comply with regulation 79 of the Education Regulations (Cap.279A) and 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. School supervisors should ensure that the list of school holidays is approved by the IMC / SMC and supported by parents. Schools should pay attention to the gazetted dates of the major public elections and include the day after the elections as a school holiday, and also pay attention to all public announcement(s) concerning the postponement/adjournment of the elections/polling and/or counting of votes.

Enquiries

8. For enquiries, please contact the respective School Development Officers or Services Officers.

K.K. LEE
for Permanent Secretary for Education