29 May 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians,

COMMUNICATION NOTE TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS ON MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME CORONAVIRUS (MERS-CoV) and AVIAN FLU (H7N9)

With the approaching June vacation, you may be planning holidays to overseas destinations for the family. As some of you could be travelling to countries and regions affected by MERS-CoV\(^1\) or avian flu\(^2\), we would like you to note Ministry of Health (MOH)’s advice for travellers to these places. Currently, MOH has advised that travellers should be vigilant and observe measures recommended by the local health authorities, including:

- Observe good personal hygiene at all times;
- Practise frequent hand washing (e.g. before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing);
- Avoid crowded places and close contact with persons suffering from acute respiratory infections (e.g. someone who is coughing or with fever);
- Avoid contact with camels, poultry and other live farm or wild animals, including not visiting camel farms. If contact has been made, thoroughly wash hands with soap;
- Adopt good food safety and hygiene practices and avoid consuming unpasteurised milk, undercooked meats and eggs, raw fruits and vegetables (unless they have been peeled), or unsafe water; and
- Wear a mask and seek medical attention promptly if you become unwell with fever and cough. For those who had recent travel history (within 2 weeks) to any areas reporting human cases of MERS-CoV or avian flu, please inform your doctor of the areas that you have travelled to).

2. As the disease situations remain dynamic, please refer to the MOH website at www.moh.gov.sg for the latest updates. For the latest global disease situations, you may also wish to refer to the World Health Organisation website at http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/index.html.

\(^1\) As of 9 May 2014, 536 laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) have been reported to WHO, including 145 deaths. The affected countries in the Middle East include Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen; in Africa: Egypt and Tunisia; in Europe: France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom; in Asia: Malaysia and Philippines; and in North America: the United States of America (USA). All of the cases recently reported outside the Middle East (Egypt, Greece, Malaysia, the Philippines and the USA) recently travelled from countries inside of the Middle East (KSA or UAE). For the latest update, please refer to WHO’s website at http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/.

\(^2\) As of 28 February 2014, a total of 375 laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus, including 115 deaths, have been reported to WHO: 367 cases by China, 2 cases by Taipei, 5 cases by Hong Kong SAR and 1 case in a Chinese Traveller, reported from Malaysia. For the latest update, please refer to WHO’s website at http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/influenza_h7n9/en/.
3. Safeguarding the health and well-being of our students is our collective responsibility. At the school level, we would continue to ensure a high level of hygiene to prevent the spread of viruses. On your part, we seek your co-operation to seek medical attention for your children should they develop flu-like symptoms and keep them away from school until they have fully recovered. Parents are also reminded to declare your child’s travel plans if he/she intends to travel.

4. We wish our students and their families a restful break during this June vacation. Please contact us if you need any clarification.

Mrs Karen Tay
Principal
CHIJ Secondary