Dear colleagues and students,

**Latest update on Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)**

In view of the recent outbreak of MERS in Korea, the HKSAR Government has raised the response level of its Preparedness Plan for the MERS to the Serious Response Level. The Government has also enhanced the surveillance and control measures for this disease.

MERS is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus called MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). According to the information from the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health of the Government, its mode of transmission is currently uncertain and people may be infected upon exposure to animals, environment or other confirmed patients, such as in a hospital setting. Based on the current limited information, MERS-CoV may be spread from human-to-human through close contact. Recent studies indicate that camels served as the primary source of MERS-CoV. The incubation period of MERS-CoV can be up to 14 days. Infected persons can develop acute serious respiratory illness with symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Many also had gastrointestinal symptoms or kidney failure.

An [e-bulletin board on MERS](#) has been set up on the University’s homepage which contains a contingency plan, announcements and other useful information on MERS for easy reference.

Additional precautionary measures have been taken on campus. All campus facilities that are frequently used by members of the University community are cleaned and disinfected more often, including study areas, libraries, student hostels, washrooms, lecture rooms, examination halls, lift compartments and lift lobbies. Facemasks are available for purchase at the Student Union Welfare Cooperation Shop on Ho Sin Hang Campus and the University Bookshop on Baptist University Road Campus.

Latest development of the MERS will be closely monitored and further announcements may be made whenever necessary. You are advised to observe good personal and environmental hygiene and frequently wash hands with liquid soap. If you have a travel plan, avoid travelling to areas affected with MERS cases particularly Korea and avoid close contact with feverish or ill persons and with animals. Observe closely your health conditions, wear a facemask if you feel unwell and seek medical advice immediately and inform the doctor of your travel history if applicable.
If colleagues and students have any queries on MERS, please feel free to contact the Environmental Health and Safety Section of the Estates Office through their hotline at 3411 7997 or email ehsu@hkbu.edu.hk.

Andy S.C. Lee
Vice-President (Administration) and Secretary

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