

# 200 asked to have tests after teacher found with TB

By Ella Lee

**A**BOUT 200 students, teachers and employees at a Sham Shui Po primary school were yesterday asked to undergo x-ray tests after a teacher was diagnosed as having tuberculosis.

The Education Department was informed by the Fuk Wing Street Government Primary School on Tuesday that a female teacher at the school's afternoon session was found with "open" tuberculosis.

Some parents were angry that the school had not notified them immediately. They also feared that bacteria could stay and circulate in the school's confined, air-

conditioned classrooms. But the school's principal, Choi Lam Muk-lan, said she had not received formal confirmation from the Department of Health on the teacher's condition until Wednesday.

Nurses from the Department of Health yesterday held a health talk for the school's 700 or so teachers and students.

The infected teacher has been on sick leave since 19 April and has been undergoing treatment.

The mother of one of the school's primary four students, said she was angry that parents had been kept in the dark.

"The school should have informed us at once so I could bring my son for a test at once," she said. "We are all worried that our children will also catch the disease."

The Department of Health has advised the school to allow fresh air into its classrooms.

The school yesterday cleaned its air conditioners with the help of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department but denied the operation was in response to the tuberculosis case.

Health officials expect the infected teacher to be well enough to work again in two weeks.

More than 200 staff and students who have had "close contact" with the infected teacher will have x-ray tests at government tuberculosis and chest services centres.

The Department of Health will also arrange health talks for the school's morning session students, but no tuberculosis screening is planned for them.

Education officer at the Education Department's government schools section Au Wong Wai-yin yesterday appealed to parents not to panic or overreact in response to the incident.

More than 6,000 cases of tuberculosis are recorded in Hong Kong each year. Sham Shui Po, the most seriously hit area, had more than 500 reported cases last year.

Each year, about 60 schools are subjected to tuberculosis screening after the discovery of active cases.

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