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## Information sheet

### HKU Study Finds Cumulative Impact of Recurring School Suspensions under the New Normal from 2020 to 2022 – Positive Action Insights for Students, Parents, Schools and Community

#### Key research findings

#### 1. Students' online learning and well-being

- **Online learning:** Compared to the data collected in 2020, schools implemented more online teaching and learning activities in 2022. Students were becoming more adapted to online learning activities. They collaborated more with classmates and completed more online assignments via digital tools.
- **Online learning self-efficacy:** Primary and secondary students' online learning self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) increased from 2020 to 2022 (primary students increased by 2.8%; secondary students increased by 4.9%, both increases are statistically significant). Primary students tended to have higher levels of online learning self-efficacy than secondary students in both years (the difference was statistically significant).
- **Online self-regulated learning strategies:** Compared to secondary students, primary students tended to use more online self-regulated learning strategies in 2022 (the difference was statistically significant), such as help-seeking, self-evaluation, and time management.
- **Cognitive emotional regulation strategies:** Primary and secondary students were more likely to use positive (refocus on planning and positive reappraisal) than negative (catastrophising and blaming others) cognitive-emotional strategies when they experienced negative events in the past six months. In addition, primary students tended to use positive strategies more often than secondary students (the difference was statistically significant).
- **Cyberbullying:** There are several typical roles in cyberbullying: perpetration, victimisation, and bystander. 55% of secondary students reported having experienced cyberbullying as bystanders. This was significantly higher than that reported by their primary counterparts (40%). Compared to secondary students, primary students were more likely to discuss with adults (parents/caregivers/teachers) when they encountered cyberbullying incidents (the difference was statistically significant).
- **Stress experienced:** In 2020, primary students were generally less stressed than secondary students, except for concentrating in the classroom. In 2022, primary students were much more adjusted to classroom learning but experienced more emotional stress.

#### Section summary

- Schools implemented more online teaching and learning activities in 2022 as compared to 2020 in response to COVID-19 disruptions to schooling.
- From the increased frequency and diversity in format of online learning, it appears that students were becoming more adapted to learning online.
- Primary and secondary students' online learning self-efficacy increased from 2020 to 2022. However, their worries also increased (e.g., more emotional stress).
- Secondary school students had less positive online learning outcomes (experiences) than primary students (e.g., online learning self-efficacy, self-regulated online learning, cognitive emotional regulation, digital resilience, strategies to address cyber-bullying).

## 2. Parents and parenting in the New Normal

- **Challenges:** Under the new normal, parents reported challenges in supporting their children's learning. Parents were most worried about their children's learning due to school suspensions. They also perceived difficulties in maintaining routines for their children's online learning.
- **Parental involvement:** Parental involvement includes home-based parental involvement and school-based parental involvement. Home-based parental involvement mainly includes helping with online learning, monitoring online activities, and parent-child communication, whereas school-based parental involvement mainly involves parents participating in school activities and parent-teacher interactions.
  - Compared to primary school parents, secondary school parents had lower home-based and school-based involvement levels in both 2020 and 2022 (the difference was statistically significant).
  - Generally speaking, parents' overall school involvement was low.
  - School-based parental involvement increased in 2022 compared to 2020 for both primary and secondary school parents.
  - In 2020 and 2022, the frequency of parent-teacher interaction was higher than parents' participation in school activities (the difference was statistically significant).
- **Digital parenting:** Digital parenting refers to parents empowering their children to be good digital citizens who can minimise risks and maximise potential to benefit from their engagement in the digital world. Parents with good digital parenting skills know how to set rules and be role models as digital citizens. Compared to secondary school parents, primary school parents had higher levels of digital parenting (the difference was statistically significant), primary parents were found to be more likely to use digital technologies in their parenting and to moderate their children's media use than secondary parents.
- **Parents' self-reported efficacy:** Parenting self-efficacy includes parents' self-efficacy in general parenting and digital parenting. General parenting refers to parents' self-efficacy in guiding their children's behaviour and learning, whereas digital parenting refers to parents' self-efficacy in guiding and monitoring children's activities online. The results indicated that parents of primary school students reported higher self-efficacy in general and digital parenting than secondary parents.
- **Parent-child relationship:**
  - Parent-child relationships (sharing, support, and understanding) were generally positive.
  - Parent-child relationships reported by primary parents were significantly more positive than that for their secondary counterparts.

### Section summary

- Compared to primary parents, secondary parents were generally less involved in their children's learning and daily life activities, and had lower levels of parenting self-efficacy.
- Compared to 2020 results, parents in 2022 were more concerned about the impact of school suspensions on their children's learning outcomes. There were also more parent-school/parent-teacher interactions, possibly reflecting more efforts made and more use of digital means of communication by both parents and schools.

## 3. Schools' Adaptations in the New Normal

- **Challenges and Impacts perceived by schools:**
  - Both school leaders and teachers believed that recurring periods of school suspension had the most negative impact on school operations and student learning.
  - School leaders' perceptions of the negative impacts due to extended periods of school suspensions increased significantly from 2020 to 2022. The level of negative impacts perceived by secondary school leaders was higher in both years (the differences were statistically significant). Perceived negative impacts by school leaders mainly include: students' lower academic performance, discipline problems, learning arrangements needed to cater for widened student academic ability, and more students requiring socioemotional support.
  - About 72% of primary school leaders and 84% of secondary school leaders indicated that their lessons were affected by school suspension.

- **Strategies to improve school operation and student learning:**
  - School leaders considered strategies to address challenges including providing teachers with professional training on facilitating online and hybrid lessons, and establishing a collaborative school culture as being more effective than others.
  - Community support was perceived as having the most positive impact on school operations and student learning.
- **Usage of digital technologies in teaching:**
  - The usage levels of technologies by primary and secondary school leaders and teachers increased from 2020 to 2022, indicating that they used digital technology more frequently in 2022 than in 2020 (the difference was statistically significant).
  - Teachers' reported usage of digital technologies increased more than that by school leaders.

### **Section summary**

- Both school leaders and teachers reported more digital technology use in 2022 compared to 2020; indicating much wider adoption of digital practices for teaching and learning as well as school administration.
- From the perspectives of schools and teachers, recurring periods of school suspension affected school operations to a large extent; and students' academic achievement might be strongly affected by school suspensions.
- Schools had instituted a variety of strategies to support teachers and students during the New Normal, and teachers found the provision of professional development for online teaching and learning and school-based teacher collaboration to be most effective.
- Support received from the community have been perceived as having the most positive impact by school leaders and teachers.