

Knowing more about your students from Hong Kong

UK schools are likely to see an increase in the number of students from Hong Kong due to a visa scheme launched in January 2021. This leaflet will help you prepare for their arrival.

1 Hong Kong - an unlikely source of refugees

For decades, Hong Kong has been ranked the world's freest economy. The former British colony was transferred to China in 1997 under the promise of "One country; two systems" until 2047, and a "high degree of autonomy" for Hongkongers.



★ HONG KONG ★

These promises were vital because Mainland China and Hong Kong differed in many ways, including:

- Hong Kong has a separate legal system, independent courts and a free press.
- Hongkongers enjoy internet freedom.
- HongKongers speak Cantonese, while Putonghua (Mandarin) is China's official language.

2 Why they are leaving for the UK

The 2019 Anti-Extradition Movement

In 2019, the Hong Kong government proposed a law to allow extradition of its residents to Mainland China. It was seen as a threat to the city's judicial independence and human rights. Nearly two million people - almost 1/3 of the population - took to the streets to oppose it.

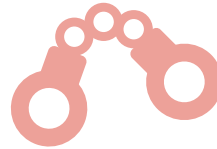
The government's initial refusal to back down and a heavy-handed police crackdown led to more than six-months of unrest and street violence.



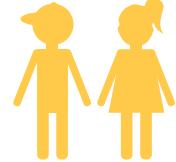
Rounds of tear gas:
16,000



Shots of rubber
bullets: 10,000



10,242 people were
arrested



Over 60% of the
protestors were
aged below 29.

The National Security Law

In June 2020, the Chinese government suddenly and unilaterally imposed in Hong Kong a law that effectively outlaws dissent and restricts rights and freedoms.

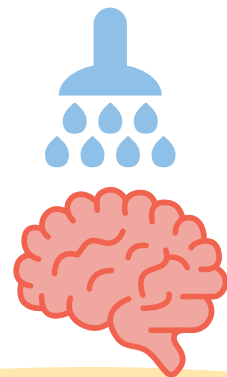
As of July 2021, there had been 117 arrests and 64 prosecutions targeting elected lawmakers, district councilors and journalists. The common charges were for speech crimes and collusion with foreign forces. The most-read newspaper was forced to close after its editors arrested.



Fears of "Brainwashing" in schools

Each school ordered to set up a national security committee to censor teaching materials; monitor the behavior of teachers and students; and report any breaches to police.

Pro-China curriculum was introduced in primary and secondary schools. Teachers were forced to undergo national security training and 80% of them said they would avoid sensitive topics in class.



⚡ BREAKING NEWS!

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Impact

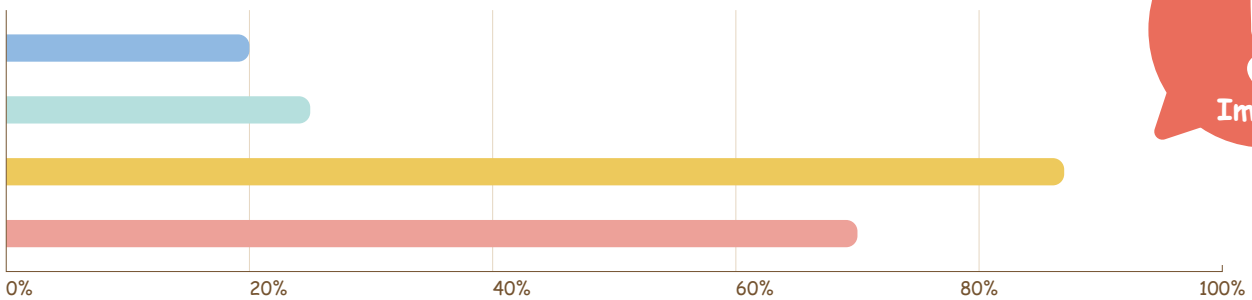
The UK government opened door to Hongkongers with British National (Overseas) status and their dependents, expecting 500,000 to come before 2022 and another 500,000 by 2026.

3 Their emotional condition

Children were key participants in the 2019 mass social movement. Over 16% of those arrested in the first six months were aged 12-17, totaling 1,707.

They have been exposed to prolonged and realistic risk of violence either in person or via social media. Some clashed with their parents over politics while others clashed with classmates who have police connections. Many faced political oppression in their schools under the security law.

Younger children have been affected as well. Some were uprooted "overnight" as parents decided to leave Hong Kong in a hurry and in secret due to safety concerns, meaning no proper farewells with classmates and friends.

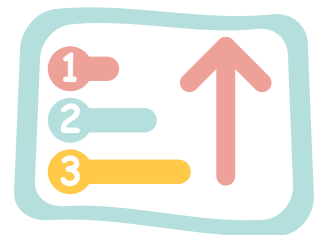


- 20% of the youth were suffering from severe or extreme depression.
- 25% of the youth were suffering with severe or extreme anxiety.
- 87% of secondary school students don't trust the government.
- 70% of secondary school students don't trust people they don't know*.

*Source: surveys by two HK universities

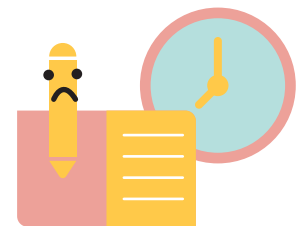
4 Mainstream schooling in Hong Kong

Both teaching and learning are competition based with intensive practice for public examinations as well as arts/ sports competitions. Individual students are ranked according to their exam results.



Typical school life

- Classrooms are teacher-centered. Discussions and interactions are generally limited. Weekly and monthly assessments are the norm, including in primary schools.
- English, which is not the first language, is a core subject from age 6 onwards. However, only 5.5% of primary schools and 25% secondary schools use English in all non-language subjects.



After schools, over 60% of students receive at least five hour of private tutoring per week. This is followed by at least 2 hours' school homework each day for Year 5 to 11 students.

- Around 40% of 12-year-olds are fluent in English to a classroom level.
- Students have limited experience in discussions and note-taking.
- Around 18% of primary school students displayed depressive symptoms.
- Over 1/2 of secondary school students displayed depressive symptoms, and 1/4 displayed anxiety symptoms*.

*Source: government reports and NGO survey



How can you help them?

- Provide more support such as specific explanations and step-by-step instructions to help them adjust to more open-ended tasks.
- Reassure students that asking questions or expressing opinion is welcome.
- Acknowledge their progress and efforts, as students/parents may find it hard to track their achievements without frequent assessments and ranking, which they are used to.
- Assign "buddies" from diverse backgrounds.
- Be alert to signs of distress or mental ill-health.
- Arrange career counselling for students in secondary schools.
- Be aware of potential anti-East and South-Asian racism exacerbated by COVID-19.



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Prepared by Hong Kong Well
For reference, please refer to the e-version on wellhk.wordpress.com