

School Education for Children of Ethnic Minorities

Aim

This information paper reports on the schooling situation and the administration measures in providing placement service for the children of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

Provision of school places

2. Under the existing policy, all eligible local children, including the non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children of the ethnic minorities, are entitled to nine-year free and universal education. It is the Government's goal to integrate children of the ethnic groups who wish to settle permanently in Hong Kong into the local community and our mainstream education system. Sufficient school places are provided for them. Parents of NCS children may choose to send their children to public sector schools or private/international schools.

3. Parents may apply directly to schools for admission of their children. The Department from time to time, receives placement requests from local children, including children of ethnic minorities. Our performance pledge is to arrange admission of these children to public sector schools up to Secondary 3 within 21 working days. Detailed figures of placement service for the children of ethnic minorities in the past three years are at Appendix 1. Placement assistance is also provided for children seeking admission to Secondary 4 level or above.

4. At present, there are seven local public sector schools that admit comparatively more NCS children. The total number of NCS children enrolled is 3025 (Appendix 2). There are still 10 vacant classrooms in these schools. More classes could be operated should there be demand of school places.

Administration measures in providing placement service for the children of ethnic minorities

5. The measures are detailed as follows-

Children seeking places in schools with local curriculum

- If places in local mainstream schools are required, these children would be placed as their local counterparts.
- If any of these children could not be placed to schools within individual Regional Education Offices (REOs), the case will be referred to the Central Placement Unit of the Department for cross REOs placement.

Children seeking places in schools operating classes for NCS children

- If a child of ethnic minorities requests for placement to a school that operates classes for NCS children, the case will be referred to the respective districts of the seven public sector schools that operate such classes and which is near to the residential area of the child, for processing.
- If the child could not be placed at the district, the case will be referred to the Central Placement Unit for cross district placement.

Support Services

6. The Department is aware that there are children including NCS children, who should be in schools but for various reasons do not attend schools. The reasons may include the working parents not having much time to take care of their children, parents not willing to have their NCS children studying in the mainstream schools and newly arrived parents knowing neither English nor Chinese. The following measures have been adopted by the Department to actively bring these children back to schools -

- following up closely by the Non-Attendance Cases Team of the Department of any dropout cases to ensure that each child of the nature will be taken care of. Prompt placement assistance will be offered;
- working closely with relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social workers to reach out to children who are not attending schools and to provide assistance to these children;
- conducting briefing and experience sharing sessions with relevant NGOs to see how our education services could be better publicised amongst these children; and
- having translated the information pamphlet on the support services of Induction Programme into Hindi, Urdu and Nepalese, the languages commonly used among such children.

7. The Department is also conscious that some NCS children may not be able to adapt to the local education system initially. Therefore, starting from 2000-01 financial year, the Department has been providing newly arrived NCS children with two types of support services which are provided also to newly arrived children from the Mainland. Block grants (\$2,720 and \$4,035 per student for primary and secondary levels respectively) are provided to schools which admit NCS children. Schools may use the grants to provide school-based support services, such as organizing tutorial classes on Chinese / English, developing special teaching materials, etc for their NCS students. In addition, subventions are provided to NGOs for running the Induction Programme, which provides the NCS children with training on social adaptation, personal development as well as basic learning skills, so as to help them adapt to the local school environment.

Education Department
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Placement of Children of Ethnic Minorities Not Attending Schools

School Year	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02 (as at 26.9.2001)
Number of children of ethnic minorities placed by the Education Department	77	64	52	32

Enrolment situation of the seven public sector schools that admit comparatively more NCS children

Level	Type of School	Name of school	District	Enrolment of NCS children
Primary	Government	Sir Ellis Kadoorie (SEK) Primary School	Wan Chai	654
		Li Cheng Uk Govt Primary School	Sham Shui Po	725
	Aided	Yaumati Kaifong Association School	Yau Ma Tei	204
		Islamic Primary School	Tuen Mun	158
	Direct Subsidy Scheme	PLK Camoes Tan Siu Lin Primary School	Yau Ma Tei	227
			Sub-total	1,968
Secondary	Government	Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (West Kowloon)	Yau Ma Tei	523
	Direct Subsidy Scheme	Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo)	Kwun Tong	534
			Sub-total	1,057
			TOTAL	3,025