

23 January 2008

Miss Odelia Leung  
Clerk to Bills Committee  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Leung,

### **The 6-Level Scale of SEN Students**

Thank you for your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> January, requesting information about the ESF SEN policy and assessment on behalf of the Hon Tommy Cheung Yu-yan.

In response to his three questions, we can provide the following information:

An overall response is that the ESF Executive Committee has now agreed its SEN policy at a meeting held in December 2007. We enclose a copy of this policy.

We are aware that publishing a policy is only one step in the journey towards achieving high quality, inclusive provision for pupils with special needs in our ESF schools. To this end, we are proposing to hold a conference in early summer 2008 to launch the policy to parents and our partners in the Hong Kong community. This conference is in the planning stage, and further details will shortly be available. We hope that the detail of your questions will be fully answered through this proposed conference.

#### **1. What is the 6 level scale of SEN students. How does the assessment mechanism work?**

We enclose a copy of the ESF SEN policy, agreed by the ESF Executive Committee in November 2007. This sets out the role of the Assessment and Review Panel in reviewing the needs and placements of students in the system. They use a matrix of six "Levels of Adjustment". The description of the levels of adjustment is quite complex. The levels cover curriculum differentiation, facilitating communication, understanding language, using language, social competency and self-regulation. We would expect students at Levels 1 and 2 to be in mainstream schools with some support; those at Levels 3-4 to be in Learning Support Classes and those at Levels 5 and 6 to be in our special school.

**2. Would the kids be reassessed regularly, and at what interval, yearly or quarterly?**

A recent audit of SEN provision is showing that SEN staff in the special school, LSCs and mainstream provision review the progress of students with SEN at least on an annual basis, and usually on a termly basis, and that where appropriate there are recommendations for movement of students along the continuum of special school/LSC/mainstream provision with support. Our expectation is that parents and students are involved in these reviews but we know that there is a degree of variation in the practice of different schools. However, through the launch of the ESF SEN policy, we will be asking all our schools to review their SEN policies to align them with the ESF policy, and to ensure that the elements of inclusive SEN practice, including assessment and review, are addressed.

**3. Would the Foundation consult parents about the 6 level scale of SEN students?**

ESF intends that the launch of the SEN policy at a conference for parents will be the start of an on-going dialogue with parents through Focus groups and other mechanisms currently being developed, that will provide a channel for the parents' voice to be heard. This will be the means by which there can be discussion with parents regarding the Levels of Adjustment.

I trust that this response reassures you with regard to the transparency and fairness of the identification and assessment process of pupils with SEN in ESF schools, and demonstrates that there is a strong intention to work with parents to ensure our schools have high quality, inclusive SEN provision.

Yours sincerely,



Heather Du Quesnay  
Chief Executive

Att

cc Dr Hon Yeung Sum, Chairman, Bills Committee

**THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION**  
**REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**FOR THE MEETING ON 27 NOVEMBER 2007**

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY –**  
**A POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT ESF SCHOOLS ONLY**

## **1. Introduction**

Children have special education needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special education provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b) have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided in ESF schools for children of the same age.

ESF's policy takes account of and is influenced by:

- ESF's role as one group of schools within the system of international schools in Hong Kong;
- ESF's special role as both a subvented and fee charging organisation;
- ESF's long term strategic planning;

ESF will continue to discharge its responsibilities in the area of special educational needs under the subvention within the financial resources available to it. As a general principle ESF will seek to fairly apportion the true costs of the provision to service users.

## **2. Principles**

2.1 ESF will offer a high quality education to all its students.

2.2 We can only educate our students well if we identify and meet their individual needs and talents and place them in the most appropriate educational setting.

2.3 We will promote schools in which the teaching and learning achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matter.

2.4 We will work in partnership with parents/carers and schools in the best interest of the young person.

2.5 All educators will work in partnership with parents and families.

2.6 The process of identifying and addressing the special educational needs of students will be clear, transparent and consistent.

2.7 Educational resources will be allocated fairly and equitably and used effectively and efficiently.

2.8 We will recognize the right of children and young people to participate in decision making and will encourage student involvement in the process whenever possible.

### **3. Commitments**

- 3.1 All our students are entitled to a full and balanced range of teaching and learning experiences. Each student will be included, as far as practicable, within the broad ESF curriculum in order to fully develop their talents.
- 3.2 In our schools there are students who may require support in order to gain access to and participate in a broad balanced curriculum. These students are likely to have a disability which will interact with their educational environment such that they require significant special educational support in order to be successful. ESF is committed to supporting these students.
- 3.3 ESF is committed to maintaining a diversity of provision to meet a wide range of special educational needs in the most appropriate setting. This includes adapting programmes and learning environments, specialized equipment or materials to support students. It recognizes that students' needs can change over the course of their schooling and is committed to accommodating these changes.
- 3.4 The ESF will give a high priority to early intervention with students in the early years of schooling.
- 3.5 ESF is committed to negotiating, documenting and reviewing regularly with parents an appropriate curriculum for students with special educational needs.
- 3.6 Resourcing mechanisms will be transparent and will ensure that the resources available are targeted effectively and equitably at students with special educational needs.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **The Role of English Schools Foundation**

- to set out our policy
- to provide a strategic overview of needs and provision for children with SEN
- to oversee the admissions of young people with Special Education needs
- to plan the range of special provision and number of places that we are able to provide
- to plan the range of special provision and number of places that we are able to provide.
- to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our special needs provision
- to seek to provide mainstream placement for young people when appropriate
- to support schools in meeting the needs of individual students within the resources available
- to provide a range of provision within our special school and learning support classes to meet the needs of young people with special educational needs.
- to support the training needs of teachers

### The Role of our Schools

- to make appropriate arrangements within resources available to meet the needs of students with SEN
- to regularly review each student with special educational needs have access to appropriate training.
- to ensure that staff working with children with special educational needs have access to appropriate professional development opportunities
- to ensure there is an identified teacher named as a Special Needs Co-ordinator
- to plan, implement and review individuals' progress regularly
- to liaise and review with parents as required on individual progress

### The Role of Parents and Carers

ESF expects that parents and carers will:

- work in partnership with the school, other agencies and ESF in the best interests of the student
- maintain close contact with the school with regard to the progress of their child and to attend review meetings.
- work with school staff to support any agreed programmes at home
- discuss any difficulties they or their child may be experiencing with the school at the earliest opportunity
- ensure that ESF/school are aware of any social or medical information that could affect the child's progress.

ESF cannot provide for all types of special educational needs of all international students in Hong Kong. ESF believes that other international schools must continue to accept responsibility for a fair proportion of this provision.

### The Role of the Assessment & Review Panel

It is chaired by the Special Needs Adviser, includes Heads of all the learning support classes, deputy from Jockey Club Sarah Roe and up to 2 Principal representatives. Its role is to:

- receives and acknowledges applications for places at Jockey Club Sarah Roe and learning support classes
- prioritises these applications based on standard ESF admissions criteria and makes recommendations to Principals and the Head of Jockey Club Sarah Roe
- plays a role in reviewing students already in the system to ensure appropriate provision is available

## **5. Additional Support provided by the Parents**

Dependent upon the needs of each individual child, ESF schools may enter into a contract whereby parents pay for an additional Educational Assistant to better support their child's needs. This currently may be up to 17 ½ hours per week. The school will appoint the Educational Assistant following the completion of a formal written agreement with the parents to fully meet the costs of recruitment and employment.