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中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref. :	EDB(SB) SA/6/1	電話 Telephone :	2892 6665
來函檔號 Your Ref. :		傳真 Fax Line :	2575 4291

21 April 2010

Miss Betty Ma
Clerk to Subcommittee
Panel on Welfare Services
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong
By Fax (2185 7845)

Dear Miss Ma,

**Panel on Welfare Services
Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services
for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly**

Thank you for your letter dated 1 April 2010 to the Secretary for Education. I am authorized to reply on his behalf.

We note that the Subcommittee has held discussions on the long-term strategy for increasing the provision of subsidized residential care places for persons with disabilities and the Government has earmarked sites in public housing estate developments, projects under the Urban Renewal Authority as well as vacant Government premises and schools for provision of residential care services. While the policy and plan for

earmarking sites/premises for setting up welfare facilities are outside this Bureau's purview and hence we are not in a position to advise, we are pleased to provide information regarding how we handle and dispose of vacant school premises in accordance with the established arrangement in the ensuing paragraphs so as to facilitate members' consideration of the subject.

The Education Bureau has a mechanism for handling vacant school premises in order to put them into gainful use. We will consider if the size, location and physical conditions of the premises would render it suitable for re-allocation for school or other educational uses. For premises which are considered suitable to be so re-cycled, we will consult relevant Government bureaux/departments as appropriate to see if re-allocation of these premises for further school or other educational uses is possible.

As for the remaining school premises that are considered not suitable/required for further educational uses given their limited size and remote locations, they will be returned to or taken back, where appropriate, by relevant Government departments for disposal in accordance with established Government policy and/or relevant lease conditions. Subject to relevant considerations, these premises may be available for use by interested Government bureaux/departments for various purposes according to the established arrangement where applicable. Should individual bureaux/departments indicate interest in any of these premises/sites in support of the initiatives under their purview, the departments concerned including Government Property Agency, Housing Department and Lands Department would check whether there are any designated or competing uses and process bureaux/departments' requests.

We have been assisting bureaux and departments in identifying vacant school premises which are not required by this Bureau for alternative uses. In this regard, we have shared with bureaux and departments the list of vacant school premises not suitable for school or other educational uses. In particular, we have also maintained close communication with the Labour and Welfare Bureau/Social Welfare Department to assist them in identifying vacant school premises which are not required for school/educational uses for their consideration. Under the

established arrangement, should bureaux/departments be interested in using any of those premises to support initiatives under their portfolio, they may approach relevant departments direct to apply for using the premises. We understand that the Social Welfare Department has explored the feasibility of converting the vacant school premises concerned for providing residential care services. Nevertheless, the school premises identified so far were found in the end not suitable for the purpose owing to their relatively small size or other constraints (e.g. lifts or ramps could not be installed or constructed to facilitate access by frail elders because of structural limitations). In any event, we would continue to liaise with the Labour and Welfare Bureau/Social Welfare Department in this regard.

Should you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact the undersigned or Ms Carmen Kong at 2892 5472.

Yours sincerely,



(Raymond Sy)

for Secretary for Education

c.c.

Commissioner for Rehabilitation
(Fax: 2543 0486)

Director of Social Welfare
(Attn: Mr Cheung Hing-wah) (Fax: 2838 0757)