

**STUDY ON HUMAN RESOURCES REQUIREMENTS AND
SALARY STRUCTURE IN KINDERGARTENS**

Executive Summary

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Towers Watson Hong Kong Limited

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1.1.1. The Committee on Free Kindergarten Education (“the Committee”) was established in April 2013 to examine the various related issues and recommend specific proposals on how to practically implement free KG education in Hong Kong. Supporting the committee’s objectives of enhancing the quality of Kindergarten (“KG”) education, this study analyses various issues relating to the human resources requirements and remuneration in KGs. The findings and proposals of the study will be provided for further consideration of the Committee.

1.1.2. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives-

- (a) review the present staffing situation and pay level of staff in local non-profit making (NPM) KGs of different types, scale and operating modes in Hong Kong;
- (b) study the key job duties/roles and pay level of staff of comparable qualifications in other relevant organisations such as the Government, quasi-government and commercial organisations to provide points of reference to the study;
- (c) gauge and analyse the views of major stakeholders on issues relating to the human resources requirements and the related pay issues in KGs;
- (d) study related overseas references gathered in identified countries and relevant sources to provide a high level benchmarking of international practice to supplement the key study findings gathered in Hong Kong; and
- (e) propose feasible and practicable options for future human resources requirements, including staffing ratios, key job duties and requirements for core KG positions, career path for teaching positions, as well as reference salary ranges and the subvention arrangements in KGs.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1. The study covers the following areas of tasks to arrive the key findings and to propose feasible and practicable options for implementation considerations -

- (a) invite approximately 870 local KGs covering different scales and operating modes (i.e. HD – Half-Day, WD – Whole-Day, LWD – Long Whole-Day) to participate in a pulse survey to collect basic information in relation to current staffing practices and staff pay level;
- (b) gather views of major stakeholders among KG school principals, KG teachers, KG parents and KG school sponsoring bodies through focus group interviews and site visits;
- (c) conduct current state analysis on the local KGs and general market benchmarking against other organisations (e.g., the Government, quasi-government and commercial organisations) on the comparable job duties/roles and pay levels of core KG positions;
- (d) review and make reference to Hong Kong local primary school’s current subvention arrangements and other related practices; and

- (e) conduct overseas research on study related issues to gather additional practice references in selected countries and other relevant overseas education authorities.

2. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. Key Job Duties and Requirements

2.1.1. A KG Hierarchy with the typical types of core teaching and non-teaching positions in relation to the KG scale and operation mode is proposed as follows –

(a) For core teaching positions,

- majority of the KGs should have a Principal and Class Teachers plus some Senior Teachers, (3 organisational layers), depending on their size. This is consistent with the current state of the KG sector and aligned with overseas research findings.
- for larger KGs (i.e., those with over 180 Whole-Day Equivalent (WDE)/360 Half-Day (HD) students), to cope with the increase in complexity of management, an additional administrative layer (i.e., Vice-Principal) could be considered to assist the Principal in managing and administering KG affairs and KG staff.

Table 1: Proposed Job Duties of Core Teaching Positions

Positions	Summary of Key Duties
Principal	Full time management executive to oversee and plan school administration and operational matters, personnel decisions, school and curriculum objectives
Vice Principal	Primarily assist the Principal in overseeing school affairs with some teaching duties
Senior Teacher	Primarily responsible for teaching duties plus some duties in relation to curriculum and administration
Class Teacher	Fully devoted to classroom instruction and teaching

(b) For core non-teaching positions,

- all KGs should have Clerk and Janitor staff (single layer).
- for the Whole-Day/Long-Whole-Day (WD/LWD) KGs with qualified kitchen facilities, the role of Cook is available (same layer as above).

Table 2: Proposed Job Duties of Core Non-Teaching Positions

Positions	Summary of Key Duties
Clerk	Act as receptionist, provide clerical and administration support
Janitor	Maintain school hygiene and safety, assist in meal distribution and provide support to teachers to take care student needs as required
Cook	Maintain KG food programs to the required quality and safety standards, assist school management on food budgets

2.2. Career Development Path for Teaching Positions

2.2.1. It is proposed that a career path for teaching positions should be in place in all KGs to attract talents and maintain a stable teaching force. The following two figures illustrate the proposed career development path for the core teaching positions with proposed guidelines for minimum jobs requirements in terms of qualifications and years of relevant experience.

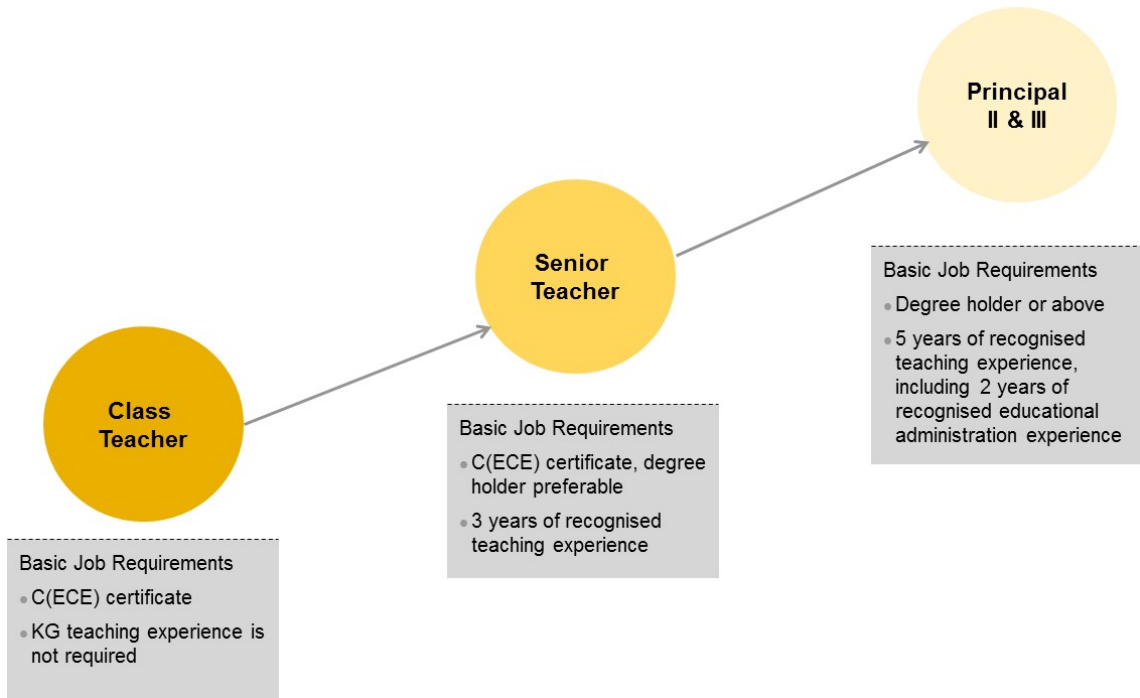


Figure 1: Career Development Path for Core Teaching Positions for Majority of KGs

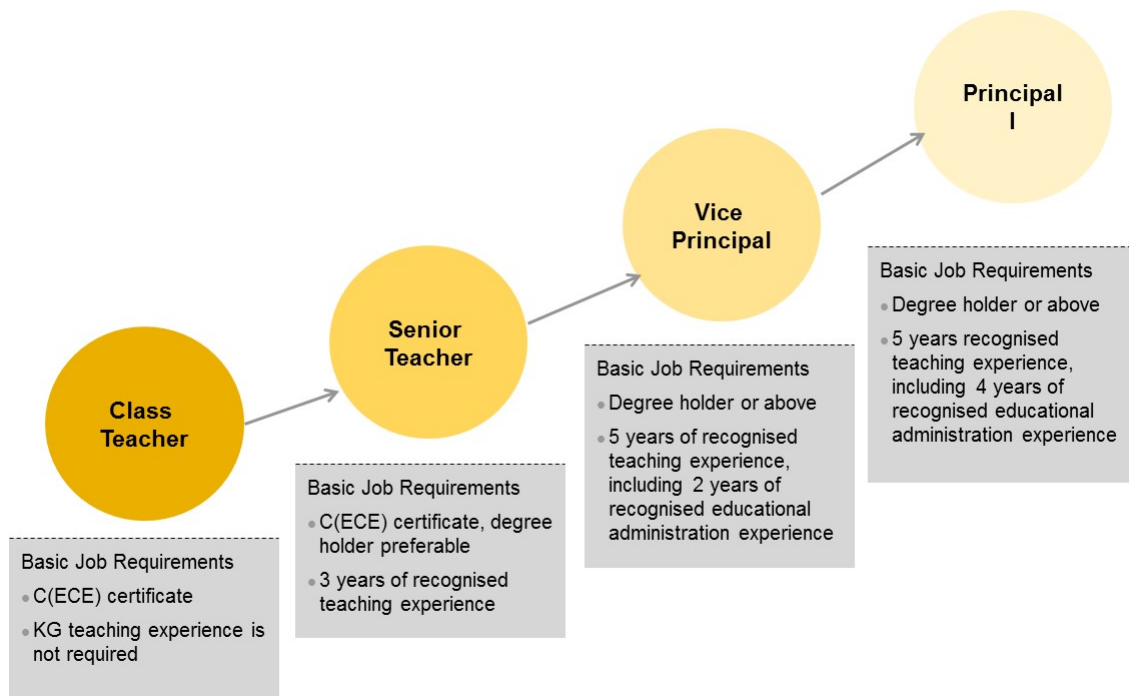


Figure 2: Career Development Path for Core Teaching Positions for Larger Scale KGs with over 180 WDE / 360 HD Students

2.3. Staffing Ratios

2.3.1. Teacher-to-Student Ratio

- It is proposed to improve the current Teacher-to-Student ratio with additional manpower resources with a view to enhancing the quality of KG education. The initial recommendation is to improve the current 1:15 Teacher-to-Student ratio (including Principal) to either 1:13 or 1:12 (excluding Principal) applying to all HD, WD and LWD KGs.
- For LWD KGs, it is recognised that staff may work longer hours with less holiday as compared to other types of KGs. Therefore, additional resources may be considered at individual KGs to cope with specific operational needs to maintain the required service quality at all times.

2.3.2. Teaching Staff Ratios

- For the establishment of the Senior Teacher position, recognising that 98% of local non-profit making (NPM) KGs have no more than 300 WDE/600 HD students and with reference to the typical management span of control and provision of adequate number of career advancement opportunities, it is proposed that there should be no more than 5 Senior Teachers in majority of the KGs.

- (b) Vice Principal may be filled when the KG size is over 180 WDE/360 HD students.
- (c) There would be one Principal in each KG, regardless of size. Based on the sizes of current KGs, it is proposed that the Principal be categorised into three levels according to KG size.
- (d) The following table summarises the proposed teaching positions in Hong Kong KGs, according to the size of the KG -

Table 3: Proposed Teaching Positions for the KGs of Various Size

KG Size	Class Teacher	Senior Teacher	Vice Principal	Principal
Over 180 WDE/ 360 HD students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Principal I
60 WDE/ 120 HD students to 180 WDE/ 360 HD students	Yes	Yes	N/A	Principal II
Less than 60 WDE/ 120 HD students	Yes	N/A	N/A	Principal III

2.3.3. Non-Teaching Staff Ratios

- (a) Clerk – each KG should have at least one clerk and one additional clerk can be considered for KGs with over 300 enrolled students.
- (b) Janitor – one janitor staff is proposed to serve every group of 25 – 30 WDE/50 – 60 HD students.
- (c) Cook – one Cook is required to serve either a WD or a LWD KG with qualified kitchens. However, for very small scale KG may not need a full-time cook, therefore a part-time cook may be considered.

2.4. Reference Pay Ranges

2.4.1. The proposed Teaching Positions reference pay ranges balances several considerations as follows -

- (a) the proposed pay levels should be able to retain talents and attract qualified applicants within or outside the KG sector, taking into consideration the competitiveness of the current pay levels and additional references from the general markets for comparable roles and levels extracted from Towers Watson (“TW”)’s Hong Kong remuneration database;
 - i. The TW remuneration survey methodology framework is underpinned by TW’s proprietary job evaluation methodology to determine the relative job ranking of a position. According to the methodology, every position consists of some generic job factors under the job input (e.g., functional knowledge and business expertise), process (e.g., problem solving) and output (nature and area of impact) dimensions, allowing for job relativity assessment among jobs within and across organisations.
 - ii. TW’s Hong Kong remuneration database gathered relevant pay information from over 10 sectors in the general market with more than 400 commercial and quasi-governmental organisations with comparable roles and/or positions to those teaching and non-teaching positions in the KG sector as additional references.
- (b) reference has been made to the current primary school pay structure, such as progression between ranges and the use of multiple KG Principal levels based on KG size; and
- (c) in consideration of the current situation in the KG sector and internal relativity among the different roles, the proposed pay levels represent an increase from the current pay levels.

2.4.2. The proposed reference pay ranges for teaching positions (class teacher and senior teacher) are indicated in the following table -

Table 6: Proposed Reference Pay Ranges for Teaching Positions

Teaching Positions	Class Teacher (CT)	Senior Teacher (ST)
Minimum Monthly Pay Range (HK\$)	\$17,000 - \$18,000	\$23,000 - \$24,000
Pay Range Spread from Minimum to Maximum (as ratio of minimum pay)	1.6 – 1.8 times	1.3 – 1.4 times

2.4.3. The proposed reference pay ranges for vice principal and principal positions are indicated in the following table -

Table 7: Proposed Reference Pay Ranges for Teaching Positions

Teaching Positions	Vice Principal (VP)	Principal III (in KG without ST)	Principal II (in KG with ST)	Principal I (in KG with VP)
Minimum Monthly Pay Range (HK\$)	\$28,000 - \$30,000	\$28,000 - \$30,000	\$31,000 - \$33,000	\$36,000 - \$38,000
Pay Range Spread from Minimum to Maximum (as ratio of minimum pay)	1.3 – 1.4 times	1.3 – 1.4 times	1.3 – 1.4 times	1.3 – 1.4 times

2.4.4. Since overall job complexity and scope for Vice Principal role in larger scale KG is assumed to be roughly comparable to a Principal III in smaller scale KG, it is proposed that their pay ranges can be the same.

2.4.5. With respect to the non-teaching positions, general market pay practices and/or the Government's pay scales for comparable roles/positions have been taken as key reference points.

2.4.6. The proposed reference pay ranges for non-teaching positions are indicated in the following table -

Table 8: Proposed Reference Pay Ranges for Non-Teaching Positions

Non-Teaching Positions	Clerk	Janitor	Cook
Minimum Monthly Pay Range (HK\$)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$12,000
Pay Range Spread from Minimum to Maximum (as ratio of minimum pay)	1.5 - 1.8 times	1.2 - 1.3 times	1.1 - 1.2 times

2.4.7. All pay ranges should be reviewed annually as a general practice with reference to relevant market information such as cost of living index to ensure continued appropriateness and competitiveness.

2.5. Subvention Arrangements

2.5.1. It is crucial to take into consideration whether the adopted mode of subvention can continuously promote the diversified operating modes in the KG sector and cope with the needs of the students and parents.

2.5.2. Reference to the current aided primary schools subvention arrangement

(a) From the employees' perspective, KG sector expressed view that the aided school mode offers greater transparency and certainty in determining staff pay.

(b) However, it is noted that such salary-related policies and practices should not be applied to KGs in isolation as the said funding mode contains some inter-related components, such as approval of number of operating classes and number of teachers, and is subject to a basket of control measures. These control measures have potential to reduce the flexibility of schools to determine the number of classes, class size and staffing. For instance, KGs will not have the flexibility in determining the number of teaching staff to meet their operational needs.

(c) In addition, the student enrolment ultimately determines level of subsidy. If central allocation of KG places is adopted for student placement, it will inevitably affect the sector's overall operating flexibility to offer diversified operating modes to address the needs of the parents concerned.

2.5.3. Provision of a grant to each KG with reference to the proposed staffing ratios and reference pay ranges, together with specific implementation guidelines from EDB

(a) This may offer greater flexibility for KG management when hiring and managing staff at different levels and with different backgrounds and associated pay levels to address the unique needs of specific KGs in accordance with their school-based mechanism.

(b) It is noted that there are substantial concerns from KG practitioners, for instance, if the grant is calculated based on the mid-point salary of the respective pay range (as adopted in some other sector), the subsidies received may not be sufficient to cover the actual staff salary expenditure (which is highly dependent on the highest qualifications attained and years of service/experience, etc.).

(c) Therefore, if specific implementation guidelines could be set to KG management for the appropriate allocation of the government fund relating to KG staff salary, this would alleviate some of the concerns from KG sector. In summary, as compared to the aided school arrangement, the provision of a grant is relatively preferable to continuously promote the diversified operating modes of the KG sector.