



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

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6 June 2016

Clerk to Panel  
Legislative Council Panel on Education  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Polly YEUNG)

Dear Ms YEUNG,

**Panel on Education**  
**Issues related to the collapse of rooftop of a building**  
**at the City University of Hong Kong and roof greening of school premises**

With regard to the request raised by Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan on the captioned subject attached in your letter dated 23 May 2016, please find enclosed our written response at the **Annex**.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Teresa CHAN)  
for Secretary for Education

For information

## **Legislative Council Panel on Education**

### **Issues Arising from the Collapse of Rooftop of a Building at the City University of Hong Kong**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the works and maintenance of green roofs of schools.

#### **Background**

2. The recent collapse of a green rooftop at the City University of Hong Kong has aroused concern about the safety of school premises with green roofs. The Education Bureau (EDB) has requested the university to submit a report on the incident. We understand that the university has established an investigation committee to look into the incident and the committee submitted a report to the university on 6 June. The university is now studying the contents of the report. The Development Bureau has also convened an inter-departmental meeting with government departments concerned to consider measures on various fronts in order to avoid recurrence of similar incidents. For secondary and primary schools, according to the records of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), there are 45 public sector school building projects completed by the ArchSD (involving 47 school premises) with greening facilities (including green roofs) that form part and parcel of the new school premises. The design of the relevant installations has been taken care of during the vetting stage of the school building projects concerned, and the greening works have met the safety requirements. Based on our records, another 66 schools have obtained the approval of EDB for implementing green roof projects after the school premises concerned were built, with 62 of them having funding support from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) and the remaining four being self-funded projects.

#### **Application Procedures and Guidelines for Roof Greening**

3. EDB attaches great importance to the safety of green roofs of school premises. In working out their plans for green roof projects, schools should seek approval from EDB in accordance with the Education Regulations if structural alteration to the school premises concerned is involved. Schools intending to conduct teaching and learning activities on green roofs should also observe the structural requirements for roof playgrounds as stipulated in the Education Regulations, including obtaining a certificate of stability from an Authorised

Person to certify that the roof is suitable for such use, and the maximum number of pupils allowed to use the playground.

4. Schools should obtain prior approval from EDB before the commencement of the installation of green systems with funds from the ECF. For such works, schools should engage an Authorised Person and Registered Structural Engineer to assess if any structural alteration to the building is involved in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance, or whether a building plan should be submitted to the Buildings Department (BD) (for non-estate schools) or the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) (for estate schools). The works may only commence after approval and consent are given by the authorities concerned. For green roof projects to be implemented in government schools, detailed information has to be submitted to the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) for approval. Matters related to the vetting procedures and the points to note/information required for application submission to EDB are available at the website of the Environmental Education and Community Action Projects.

5. If schools intend to carry out self-funded green roof projects, they should submit their proposals to the ICU of THB (for estate schools), ArchSD (for government schools), the Department of Health and the Fire Services Department respectively. As for non-estate non-government schools, they should seek the advice of an Authorised Person and Registered Structural Engineer. Where a new building or building works including the strengthening of the existing structures are involved, schools should engage an Authorised Person and Registered Structural Engineer to submit a building plan to BD. The works may only commence after BD has given its approval and consent.

6. Should the relevant departments raise no objection, schools may submit their formal applications to EDB. Detailed information on maintenance and alteration works in aided schools is set out in Sections 8.5 and 8.6 of the School Administration Guide.

### **Support for Schools by EDB**

7. EDB has already issued a letter to all schools, reminding them of the points to note with regard to green roof installations, including the requirements to be observed in carrying out such projects. We have also attached to the letter the recommendations drawn up by BD in respect of green roof works at school premises and assessment of the existing green roofs. Should schools notice seepage, cracks or loose concrete on the ceiling of the storey below the green roof, they should seek professional advice from an Authorised Person or Registered Structural Engineer as soon as possible to ensure the safety of their school premises. For aided schools, they may also submit applications for emergency repairs to EDB according to the established arrangement if such need arises. The term consultants appointed by the EDB

will visit the schools concerned to assess the condition and advise on the follow-ups as appropriate. For government schools, they should contact ArchSD immediately for follow-ups or repairs to ensure safety. As we understand, some schools have recently engaged professionals for inspection of the structure and maintenance of their green roofs. On the other hand, our term consultants have immediately contacted aided schools which have reported to us the condition of the ceiling of the storey below its green roof through the emergency repair mechanism for inspection. The ceilings concerned were confirmed structurally safe and we have also advised the schools on the follow-up actions to be taken.

8. In addition, we, together with BD and other relevant departments, will arrange a briefing session in mid-June for school management staff and relevant stakeholders on the points to note when conducting green roof projects, how to manage existing green roofs, etc. Any queries they might have over such installations will also be answered.

### **Conclusion**

9. Generally, green roof projects at existing school premises, if assessed and conducted by professionals with approval from relevant authorities and kept under proper maintenance and repair, will not give rise to any safety concern. We have reminded schools which have not submitted applications for their green roof works according to the requirements of relevant ordinances to contact the School Development Section of their respective district as soon as possible for immediate follow-up.

### **Advice Sought**

10. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Education Bureau

June 2016