



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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Miss Polly YEUNG
Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Yeung

Panel on Education
Free kindergarten policy regarding ethnic minority children

I refer to your letter dated 18 April 2016 requesting the Administration to provide a written response to the submission from Hong Kong Unison Limited expressing views and concerns on free kindergarten policy regarding ethnic minority children. Our response is at the **Annex** for Members' reference.

Yours sincerely

(C S WOO)
for Secretary for Education

Encl.

Response to the Submission from Hong Kong Unison Limited

The Education Bureau (EDB) is committed to encouraging and supporting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students' integration into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. NCS parents are encouraged to send their children to kindergartens (KGs) offering local curriculum for their early exposure to an immersed Chinese environment.

Support to KGs admitting NCS children

2. Under the free quality KG education policy to be implemented from the 2017/18 school year, a grant comparable to the salary of one KG teacher will be provided for KGs admitting eight or more NCS students to help KGs enhance the support for their NCS students. We are devising the implementation details of the new policy including, among others, the application procedures and ambit / usage of various grants (including the afore-mentioned grant for support to NCS students). In this regard, we have been collecting views of the stakeholders with a view to developing user-friendly application procedures (such as provision of templates) so as to minimize KGs' administrative work. The implementation details will be released in the third quarter of 2016. Administration guidelines on usage of individual grants will also be issued in due course.

3. On learning and teaching, according to our observation, individual KGs provide support to NCS students through various measures including effective use of group learning time to promote close peer interaction among NCS students and local students, telling stories with the support of picture cues and dramatized actions, emphasizing the linguistic features of Chinese language, etc. Under the free quality KG education policy, professional support will continue to be provided and enhanced. EDB will continue to provide diversified support services, including professional training for teachers, on-site support services offered by EDB's expert team, University-School Support Programme, etc. to meet the needs of KGs with different proportion of NCS students in facilitating NCS students' Chinese learning and transition to primary education. All KGs, regardless the number of NCS students they have admitted, are invited annually to apply for school-based support services according to their needs.

Teachers' training

4. "Children with Diverse Needs" is one of the core (i.e. compulsory) domains in the Programme Framework of the Certificate in Early Childhood Education Course issued by EDB. One of the key objectives of this domain is "to

demonstrate competence in working with other professionals and mobilising community resources to support children with diverse needs and cultural backgrounds and their families." In other words, teachers will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills in catering for the needs of NCS children in their teacher training. Starting from the 2016/17 school year, a new course Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Early Childhood Education) in Leadership and Non-Chinese Speaking Children will be offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Education to strengthen teachers' professionalism in supporting NCS students.

School admission and communication with NCS parents

5. To ensure equal education opportunity for all children regardless of their race, gender and ability, EDB has advised schools via different channels, including school circular and briefing sessions that their school-based admission mechanism should be fair, just and open, and in compliance with the existing legislation (including the anti-discrimination ordinances like Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO)) as well as circulars and guidelines issued by EDB. EDB will continue to invite representatives from Equal Opportunities Commission to brief KGs on the key points to note under RDO in admission arrangements. KGs are required to inform parents in advance of the details of their school-based admission mechanism through effective channels (for example, guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, school website, etc.) and provide assistance (such as translation and/or interpretation) to NCS students/parents as appropriate. To ensure that a proper and transparent student admission mechanism is in place, EDB will continue to issue guidelines to KGs such as on provision of bilingual documents on admission for NCS children as appropriate to ensure equal opportunities for NCS children in school admission. In this connection, EDB will provide bilingual templates of relevant documents in relation to KG admission arrangement for KGs' reference.

6. Starting from the 2016/17 school year, EDB would publish the Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres (KG Profile) in separate Chinese and English printed versions. We are soliciting support from non-government-organisations (NGOs) which are providing services to NCS parents/children, to facilitate their easy access to the KG Profile. They will be invited to confirm the number of copies they would like to reserve for further arrangement. NGOs may make flexible arrangements such as displaying, circulating or distributing the KG Profile to parents in need so that more parents could be benefited.

7. As mentioned at Paragraph 3 above, KGs admitting eight or more NCS students will be provided with a grant under the new policy. With the additional resources, KGs could strengthen support for their NCS children including, among others, enhancing communication with NCS parents, for instance, through procurement of translation services. EDB is now producing a set of cue cards with audio files for KGs to express care and concern for NCS parents in their daily contact in order to create a more inclusive school environment.