



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. : (9) in L/M (1) to EDB(NACT)/6-15/1/1 Pt.1

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17 November 2017

Clerk to Panel on Welfare Services  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Catherina YU)

Dear Ms YU,

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services  
Follow-up on Matters Raised at the Panel's Special Meeting  
on 28 September 2017**

I refer to your letter dated 30 October 2017 on the above subject.  
The supplementary information requested by members at the meeting is set  
out at Annex for reference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SO Yuen-yi'.

( Ms SO Yuen-yi )  
*for Secretary for Education*

**Education Bureau's Response to Request for Information  
at the Panel's Special Meeting of  
the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services  
on 28 September 2017**

**Support Services for Non-attendance Students**

According to the requirements, schools have to report cases of students' non-attendance to the Education Bureau (EDB) on the 7th day of their continuous absence. EDB will assess the non-attendance cases reported by schools and provide support services to individual non-attendance students and their parents as appropriate.

2. Concerning the relevant information of those non-attendance students, we can only provide the data in the 2015/16 school year at the moment as the data in the 2016/17 school year are still being compiled. In the 2015/16 school year, the total number of non-attendance students at the primary and junior secondary levels was around 1 700, and the number of non-attendance students at senior secondary level was around 1 900. We are unable to provide the data on the duration of and reasons for students' non-attendance as we have not compiled such statistics. According to our understanding, the reasons for students' non-attendance in recent years are complicated and involve various factors including adjustment in learning and social interaction, personal development, family and parenting problems as well as physical, mental and psychological problems, etc. Among the aforementioned non-attendance students at primary and junior secondary levels, around 70 per cent of them resumed schooling within that school year. For those students who have not resumed schooling, EDB would continue providing services for them, and render appropriate support to them based upon the circumstances of non-attendance cases. Depending on the needs of these non-attendance students or their families, EDB would refer these cases to Social Welfare Department or relevant social services agencies including Hospital Authority, Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness in different districts, non-governmental social services organisations for professional support services or appropriate programme(s) with a view to assisting the students and their families concerned to tackle the problem at source.

3. It is the Government's policy to provide nine-year free and universal basic education to children aged between 6 and 15. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children within these ages attend school regularly. EDB will continue to review the progress of non-attendance cases from time to time. After making such inquiries as considered necessary into a non-attendance case and confirming that the child is suitable for school resumption, EDB may serve upon a parent an attendance order in accordance with relevant stipulations of the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) requiring him/her to cause the child to attend school if he/she insists on not causing the child to attend school regularly without valid reason(s). Before issuing an attendance order to a parent, EDB will seek the professional advice from relevant government departments on the conditions of the respective non-attendance case so as to decide if an attendance order has to be served to the parent concerned. As mentioned above, the reasons for students' non-attendance are complicated. In recent years, we have been aware that parental insistence on not causing the child to attend school is not the culprit for a vast majority of non-attendance cases. Rather, the personal problems of the students themselves or their family problems are the reasons behind. Issuing parents the attendance orders therefore cannot solve their problems. As such, EDB will collaborate with other government departments to provide, taking into account the root of non-attendance problem, appropriate support services for the students and families concerned in order to help such students resume schooling as soon as possible.

4. At present, the Non-attendance Cases Team (NACT) consists of Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors and Student Guidance Officers (SGO). The non-attendance cases in primary schools are handled by the Student Guidance Officers, Student Guidance Teachers or Student Guidance Personnel stationing in primary schools. Regarding the handling of non-attendance cases in secondary schools, the main task for handling the cases at senior secondary level is to understand preferences of the parents and students and provide them with information on further studies and career pathways. Therefore, the number of such cases requiring further follow-ups is small (about 100 cases in the 2015/16 school year) and the follow-up work required is relatively simple. These cases are co-ordinated by the Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors in the NACT. The SGOs in the NACT are mainly responsible for handling non-attendance cases at junior secondary level. In the 2015/16 school year, each SGO handled about 100 non-attendance cases at junior secondary level. In the course of case handling, they made some 860 home visits, 420 interviews (exclusive of interviews during home visits) and 49 700 phone contacts.

5. In handling non-attendance cases, EDB will collaborate with the student guidance personnel and social workers of schools to contact the parents and non-attendance students proactively through various channels, including phone calls, mails, home visits, making contact with their relatives, or liaising with government departments such as Social Welfare Department, Immigration Department and Housing Department for relevant contact information whenever necessary. In the 2015/16 school year, for those non-attendance cases reported by schools to this Bureau, there were about 20 cases that were unable to contact by all means and follow-up work was thus unable to be proceeded further. EDB is now reviewing the prevailing approach to handling non-attendance cases (including those in which the students cannot be contacted) and exploring ways to further strengthen our collaboration and communication with other relevant government departments so as to uphold the students' right to education.