



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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21 August 2019

Panel on Education
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Angel WONG)

Dear Ms WONG,

Panel on Education

Discussion in Schools Prompted by Amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance

I refer to the letter from the Panel on Education dated 27 June 2019 requesting a response from this Bureau to the concerns raised by Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan and Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan in relation to the captioned matter. Our response is as follows:

Hong Kong is a pluralistic society, and we respect different views. Schools and teachers must uphold professionalism and adopt a neutral, unbiased and multiple perspectives in guiding students to explore and discuss social issues. When selecting topics for discussion, teachers have to consider whether the nature of the topic is appropriate to students' levels and whether the information cited covers different sources and perspectives. In the course of discussion, teachers should guide students to make an unbiased and rational analysis in an open and objective manner so as to develop their critical thinking skills and their positive values such as respect and acceptance.

The controversies over the amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance have created a tense atmosphere in society which may also affect schools. Individual teachers may discuss these issues with students. We stress that these discussions must be conducted in an unbiased and objective manner and the views and behaviour of teachers must be in compliance with the professional conduct. As employers, schools are responsible for managing their staff and monitoring their performance. The Education Bureau (EDB) has maintained close contact with schools to keep abreast of their situation in order to provide timely support. Regarding media reports on how individual teachers handled such issues, we have, based on the information gathered, approached the schools concerned for details and their follow-up work and provided appropriate support for them.

In response to calls for the public to commit acts disrupting social order and to launch class boycott, the Secretary for Education issued a letter to all schools in Hong Kong on 13 June 2019 to sincerely appeal to them to protect their students, explain to students and parents that the public activities concerned might involve illegal acts, and caution students against participating in such activities. Meanwhile, schools should remind their students to remain vigilant regarding information available online, put their personal safety above everything else and stay away from potentially dangerous places. The Secretary for Education clearly stated that schools are places for students to learn and they should never be used for expressing political demands as that would not only affect normal school operations, but also drag innocent and immature students into political turbulence, losing their normal learning opportunities. The Secretary for Education also thanked school heads and teachers for their commitment, and called on them to continue to uphold professionalism and work together to protect their students.

The EDB will continue to understand the needs of students and put their interests as the paramount consideration. It is hoped that, at this moment, school heads, teachers and parents will devote extra efforts to cater for students' needs, and provide them with guidance and support as appropriate. The EDB will also continue to maintain close liaison with schools, keep abreast of their situation and provide them with professional advice and support where necessary.

Yours sincerely,



(LEE Kam-kwong)

for Secretary for Education