



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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4 February 2020

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

Dear Ms Wong,

**Motion passed by the Legislative Council Panel on Education
under the agenda item
“Matters arising from the policy briefing on 1 November 2019”
at the meeting on 6 December 2019**

With reference to your letter of 6 December 2019 relating to the subject motion proposed by Hon Elizabeth QUAT and Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, the Education Bureau (EDB)'s response is provided below.

Teachers play a vital role in passing on knowledge and nurturing students' character, and their every word and deed have a far-reaching impact on students' growth. It is therefore of the utmost importance that their words and deeds must adhere to the standards of professional conduct and morality generally accepted by the community. As stated in the Code for the Education Profession of Hong Kong, a professional educator should show respect for the law and the behavioural norms acceptable to society, do his/her best to maintain a healthy social environment and should not discriminate against students on the basis of political belief, family background, etc. Whether within or outside school, teachers should neither circulate hate speech nor instigate students to break the law.

The EDB has been rigorously maintaining a teaching profession of high quality and with professional conduct to ensure the quality of education in Hong Kong and safeguard students' well-being. Under the Education Ordinance, the Permanent Secretary for Education is empowered to cancel the registration of a teacher in specific circumstances. The EDB has all along seriously followed up suspected cases of professional misconduct in accordance with the established procedures and in a professional manner. If a teacher is found to have committed an offence or an act of gross misconduct, the EDB will review the professional conduct of the teacher basing on the information available and take appropriate actions having regard to the facts and severity. Such actions, which include the issue of advisory, warning or reprimand letters or even cancellation of teacher registration, seek to uphold teachers' professional conduct. Besides, as a provider of formal education and employer of teachers, schools have to be responsible for the quality of education, and monitor their teachers. Should any misconduct be detected among their teaching staff, schools are required to take appropriate disciplinary actions pursuant to the Employment Ordinance, the Code of Aid and the terms of their employment contracts.

For cases involving government school teachers, if the officer concerned is found guilty of disciplinary offence upon investigation, the EDB will take appropriate follow-up actions against the officer according to established civil service disciplinary mechanism having regard to the gravity, particulars and merits of individual case.

In addition, schools are places for students to learn and thrive. All along, the EDB has been working closely with schools and various sectors in the society to safeguard students' well-being so that they can study in a safe and orderly environment. In view of the recent social incidents, students have been bombarded with a lot of online information, some of which is true and some fake. Hence, in our letter to schools and parents dated 27 September 2019, it is stressed that students should learn to distinguish right from wrong from the proliferation of real and fake information on the Internet, while teachers, being a role model through words and deeds, would help students develop a good understanding of what is right and wrong.

On the other hand, students also express their personal views through the Internet. While Hong Kong is a pluralistic society, where everyone (including students) enjoys freedom of expression, views must be expressed in a peaceful, rational and respectful manner. No one should disseminate messages that provoke hatred or incite others to take part in dangerous or illegal activities. In this connection, the EDB issued a letter to schools and parents on 27 September 2019 and wrote to principals, teachers, parents and students on 19 December 2019, reiterating clearly that schools are not venues for different political stances to vie for influence. Students should analyze issues objectively and rationally from various perspectives, and to express their views in a reasonable and lawful manner. Meanwhile, schools and teachers should, through daily teaching, teach and help students to build up positive values and enable them to understand that they should express their views in a peaceful and rational manner as well as respect diverse views on any occasion or platform (including online social chat groups). Students should refrain from jumping to hasty judgement based on information that has yet to be verified. More importantly, they should not spread messages that encourage violence or hostility.

The EDB will keep close contact with schools, reminding students to be alert to the proliferation of real and fake information on the Internet. They should be vigilant from time to time, able to distinguish right from wrong and verify sources carefully. In addition, we will also urge schools to strengthen the cultivation of students' positive values and the right attitude towards interacting with others. We will also provide timely support to schools as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



(LEE Kam-kwong)

for Secretary for Education