

教 育 統 籌 局



EDUCATION AND MANPOWER BUREAU

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15 January 2003

Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
(Attn: Miss Sandy CHU)
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Chu,

**Director of Audit's Report on
Results of Value for Money Audits (Report No. 39)
Chapter 10 : Primary Education – Administration of Primary Schools**

I refer to your letter dated 9 January 2003 on the caption.

The acceptance of donations from textbook publishers and other suppliers by schools is governed, where appropriate, by the Codes of Aid and standing circulars on the subject (e.g. Administration Circular (AC) No. 2/98 on The Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, Cap 201 and Schools Curriculum Circular No. 1/2002 on Notes on Selection of Textbooks and Learning Materials for Use in Schools, which are attached as Annex 10 to our earlier letter to you dated 27 December 2002). In short, donations from textbook publishers and other suppliers of goods and services are accepted only under exceptional circumstances. This should be fully justified, approved by the School Management Committees (SMCs) and properly documented. Also, SMCs of aided schools must seek approval from this Bureau for accepting donations, which would result in additional expenditure either from government or school funds. In addition, they are required to report on a quarterly basis details about donations accepted and to fully record the donations in the schools' subscription/general funds account for audit purposes.

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To step up current actions/measures, we are now revising AC No. 2/98 with emphasis on the following requirements -

- (a) SMCs should include, in the relevant documents such as invitations to tenders/quotations and contracts of goods/services, the warning of "not to offer advantages to school staff in their official dealings".
- (b) Schools have to include the amount and the purpose of the donations in their School Annual Report and record in an open register which can be accessed by members of the public.
- (c) SMCs will not be required to report acceptance of donations to this Bureau so as to reduce workload on the part of schools, but will be subject to periodic audits to ensure compliance with stipulated accountability requirements.

Specifically, on textbooks selection and publishers' donations we have incorporated the suggestions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Consumer Council in existing circulars to safeguard consumer rights of parents/students. You may also wish to note that the Textbook Publishers Organizations have laid down a Code of Practice Regarding Donations to Schools for their members. This Bureau also reminds publishers not to offer donations to schools during regular joint meetings with them.

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs Fanny Law)

Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower

c.c. Secretary for Education & Manpower
Director of Audit