

**For information
on 16 February 2004**

**Legislative Council Panel on Education
Bullying and Violence in Schools**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members of the present situation of bullying and violence in schools as well as the assistance and related support services provided by the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to schools in handling these problems.

Present Situation

2. Every year, EMB collects from discipline teachers of primary and secondary schools information about student problems which they have handled and need to be followed up with students' parents or guardians. Such information is useful to EMB for the planning of discipline services, guidance services and teacher training.
3. The number of bullying cases and violent incidents handled/followed up by discipline teachers of primary and secondary schools in the past three school years (2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03) are listed below.

Cases of bullying and violence handled by discipline teachers of primary schools

Table 1

Bullying of schoolmates, such as teasing, threatening, intimidating and damaging other's property	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
No. of Cases	359	467	399
Percentage in the total primary student population	0.07%	0.10%	0.09%

Table 2

Use of violence towards schoolmates	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
No. of Cases	244	257	220
Percentage in the total primary student population	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%

Cases of bullying and violence handled by discipline teachers of secondary schools

Table 3

Bullying of schoolmates, such as teasing, threatening, intimidating and damaging other's property	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
No. of Cases	777	748	643
Percentage in the total primary student population	0.17%	0.17%	0.14%

Table 4

Use of violence towards schoolmates	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
No. of Cases	426	427	346
Percentage in the total secondary student population	0.10%	0.10%	0.08%

HKPF's Support to Schools

4. HKPF introduced a school liaison programme in 1974. Under the programme, School Liaison Officers and Secondary School Liaison Officers (58 in total) offer assistance to schools to early identify students with behavioural problems and organise talks and activities to develop students' self-discipline, confidence and civic-mindedness, character and leadership as well as their understanding on the consequences of involvement in bullying and unruly behaviours. The liaison officers also advise schools to formulate a mechanism which encourage students to understand, properly handle and report bullying cases.

SWD's Support to Schools

5. School provides an appropriate entry point for rendering support to young people and their families. SWD has been implementing a series of new initiatives in schools since 2000 with a view to addressing the multifarious needs of students better. These new initiatives focus on early identification of the needs of students and providing them as well as their parents with timely intervention. The objective is to help enhance the ability of youth in overcoming developmental difficulties for the purpose of forestalling at-risk behaviour or prevent further aggravation of such behaviour. The new initiatives include -

- (a) Implementing the policy of “one school social worker for each secondary school” in all secondary schools with effect from the 2000/01 school year to strengthen the support for students, parents and school personnel. Apart from providing each school with one stationing school social worker, the school social worker will also mobilise community-based welfare services according to the needs of students and individual schools;
- (b) Implementing the Understanding the Adolescent Project by phases in all secondary schools starting from the 2001/02 school year for early identification of the needs of Secondary One students and providing them with primary preventive programme for the purpose of enhancing their resilience. The evaluation study conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong on the effectiveness of the project confirms that the preventive programme is effective in strengthening students' ability in emotion management, conflict resolution, problem solving and communication with others, as well as the sense of belonging to family and school, sense of responsibility and willingness to help others, etc; and
- (c) Implementing an enhanced referral mechanism for welfare services for the Student Health Service in collaboration with the Department of Health and EMB since February 2002 to ensure more effective and timely referral of students-in-need as well as their parents to appropriate consulting/guidance services units for follow up action.

EMB's Support to Schools

On-site Support to Schools

6. In addition to regular school visits, EMB also provides on-site support in emergencies. For example, should there be bullying cases or violent incidents which affect the emotions of students and teachers, or disrupt the normal operation of schools, the School Development Officers of the Regional Education Offices and the Guidance & Discipline Section and Educational Psychologists will provide on-site support to schools. The officers will, if necessary, collaborate with other government departments, such as SWD and HKPF, as well as non-government organisations to render immediate and follow up services. These services include group and individual counselling to teachers, students and parents in need, referral of cases, etc. The officers will also explore the impact of the progress of the incidents on teachers and students through, inter alia, observation and the conducting of questionnaire survey for the purpose of arranging further support.

Educational Psychology Service

7. The Educational Psychologists and School Development Officers of EMB will provide school-based support and consultation to schools to help teachers manage and follow up on bullying and violence cases, as well as devise remedial and preventive measures. Educational Psychologists will consider psychological assessment and referral service for individual students according to the severity of their behavioural difficulties. These students may be referred to the adjustment programmes in EMB, placement in the School for Social Development, or child psychiatrists with a view to supporting students in need through multi-disciplinary collaboration.

8. Moreover, the Educational Psychologists also conduct school-based staff development to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in handling students with behavioural and emotional adjustment difficulties and to strengthen student support services at schools. These include early identification and intervention of students at risk; strengthening the collaboration between the class teachers and Discipline and Guidance teams; and developing students' skills in coping with bullying. In addition, the Educational Psychology Service Sections of EMB also provide training to the School Liaison Officers of HKPF on related themes.

9. To strengthen professional support to schools, EMB will enhance school-based educational psychology service by phase extension from 25 primary schools in 2002/03 to 200 primary schools in 2007/08 through outsourcing.

Improvement to the Manning Ratio of Guidance Personnel

10. With the improvement to the manning ratios of the student guidance personnel in primary schools and school social workers in secondary schools, these personnel can conduct more developmental and preventive work in schools, thus preventing student's problems. The quality of guidance service will be improved as a result. In secondary schools, starting from 2000/01, every school has been provided with one school social worker. In primary schools, every school with 24 classes or more has been provided with one student guidance personnel since 2002/03 to provide the comprehensive student guidance services.

11. The aim of this improvement measure is to facilitate the development of a caring and participative learning environment. In primary schools, through the active promotion of EMB, the personal growth education has been implemented in schools to address the needs of all students in terms of personal, social, academic and career development. Schools can provide such education through classroom learning, organised guidance programmes, group and cross-curriculum activities for students to handle emotions, resolve conflict and acquire problem solving skills, so that bullying and violence in schools can be reduced.

Understanding Adolescent Project

12. Based on the experience of the 6-year (1994-2000) pilot Understanding Adolescent Project (UAP) in secondary schools, which is a success, a similar project has been implemented in 18 primary schools by three years since 2001/02 on a pilot basis. The pilot UAP(Primary) has also been successful. Through the project, students learn the skills of problem solving, communication and interpersonal relationship. And through the Hong Kong Student Information Forms validated in the project, students with the need for the 'Intensive Programme' are identified and thus the resilience of students (including their competence, belongingness and optimism) can be enhanced. Upon the completion of the pilot project in 2003/04, the project will be rolled-out in 2004/05 and extended to 500 primary schools by two years.

Smart Teen Challenge Project

13. EMB has collaborated with different disciplinary forces to conduct the Smart Teen Challenge Project since 2000 with the aim of helping secondary school students to become confident, self-disciplined and sociable through highly structured discipline and physical training. Follow-up activities in school can help students sustain their positive changes made and the students can continue to improve and excel in self-discipline, confidence, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills and resilience. The Project serves 4 600 secondary school students each year on average.

Teacher Training and Support

14. At present, teacher training courses at certificate or degree level offered by tertiary institutions include a required subject/unit on “Understanding and Handling Students with Learning and/or Behavioural Problems” or the like. As to the enhancement of teacher training and support, other than the regular workshops and seminars, EMB also organises guidance and discipline courses addressing the concerns of schools. For example, every year EMB organises workshops, seminars or district network activities on bullying and violence in schools for the participation of teachers. Academics, social work professionals and experts from different sectors are invited to share their professional views on the subject, to explore appropriate measures and to share various community resources with the view to enhancing teachers’ knowledge and strategies on the identification, management and prevention of bullying and violence behaviour in schools.

Moral and Civic Education

15. EMB organises “Teacher Professional Development Course on Moral and Civic Education” for primary and secondary school heads and teachers on a regular basis. A series of courses on related topics including “Life Skill Education” and “Managing Students’ Mental and Emotional Health” have been introduced since September 2003. Teaching materials and exemplars related to the life experience of students have been uploaded onto the Moral and Civic Education Resources Net of EMB for the reference of teachers.

16. In addition, EMB has brought in other relevant organisations to support schools to enhance teachers’ skills in delivering moral and civic education. For instance, EMB has promoted the Adolescent Health Programme provided by the Department of

Health. The objective of this initiative is to help students build up proper values and attitudes including respecting and mixing peacefully with others, better grasp the skills of problem-solving and enhance their competency in self-management.

Tackling the Problem at School Level

17. Bullying is not so easily noticed and may therefore be neglected. It also involves intricate interpersonal relationships. Efforts of individual teachers in managing isolated bullying incidents could only stop bullying for a short while. In order to attain a lasting effect in tackling and preventing bullying, schools should adopt a whole school policy by which all school personnel, parents and students have a consensus view and clear understanding of the objective, intervention strategies, preventive measures and evaluation mechanism in tackling bullying and a close collaboration in effecting all relevant measures with a view to building a harmonious school ethos.

18. In this connection, EMB has developed a resource package entitled “Co-creating a Harmonious School” with a view to presenting to teachers a systematic way to look at the matter so as to create a safe and harmonious school for all students. This package aims at enhancing teachers’ awareness and knowledge of the phenomenon of bullying and supporting schools to assess the problem and formulate intervention, follow-up support and preventive strategies on bullying. The package comprises an assessment questionnaire to review the bullying situation in their own schools, lesson plans, classroom activities and teacher training workshop materials accompanied by demonstration videos, and a song. Schools can select the relevant materials according to their own needs. The resource package has been issued to all primary and secondary schools in January 2004. A series of train the trainer workshops on management and prevention of bullying will be conducted in April.

19. EMB will continue to make the best efforts to implement all necessary measures to enhance teacher training and support so as to strengthen their ability and skills in handling bullying and violence in schools. To successfully reduce and curb the incidents of bullying and violence among students and to develop a harmonious school environment, we need the concerted efforts of schools, teachers, parents, students and the community at large.

Education and Manpower Bureau

February 2004

Panel on Education

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 12 February 2004)

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

1. University admission system

In discussing curriculum reform on 21 January 2002, the Panel requested the Administration to ensure that the future senior secondary curriculum and university admission system would align with the new curriculum for basic education.

To be confirmed

The consultation on the new senior secondary and university education academic systems as recommended in the 2004 Policy Address will include recommendations for university admission.

2. Support for students with learning difficulties

In discussing the issue of students with learning difficulties at the meeting on 28 February 2002, members agreed to revisit the issue at a future meeting. The Administration undertook to revert to the Panel after consulting the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), Equal Opportunities Commission, parents associations and tertiary institutions on the views and concerns of members on the necessary support arrangements for students with learning difficulties.

To be confirmed

At the meeting on 18 November 2002, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung suggested to follow up the issue in December's meeting. The Administration explained that the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) was co-ordinating efforts with the Department of Health, HKEAA and parent-teacher associations on arrangements to improve support services for students with learning difficulties. The Administration provided on 12 December 2002 an information paper which summarises the services provided by EMB for children with specific learning difficulties for members' reference.

3. Transparency and representation of the new Education Commission (EC)

The Bills Committee on Education Reorganisation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2002 requested the Secretary for Education and Manpower to make a pledge to increase the transparency and representation of EC in his speech during the resumption of Second Reading debate on the Bill. Some members of the Bills Committee were also of the view that the new EC following the merger should become a statutory body in the longer term in order to enhance its advisory role. At the meeting of the House Committee on 7 February 2003, Ms Cyd HO suggested that the issue should be followed up by the Panel on Education.

To be confirmed

4. Study on teaching in small class

The Panel discussed the item at meetings held on 18 November 2002, 28 April, 19 May and 16 June 2003 respectively. At the meeting on 16 June, the Panel requested the Administration to evaluate and identify the good practices for inviting interested sponsoring bodies to apply for their schools to participate in the proposed study, and explain the criteria for its evaluation of the good practices. The Administration will revert to the Panel on the findings of the first stage of the study and the way forward on second stage of the Study on 16 February 2004.

16 February 2004

5. Implementation of four-year first-degree programmes

Ms Emily LAU noted that there were views in the community opposing the proposed four-year structure for first-degree programmes. On 5 July 2003, she suggested the Panel to discuss with the Administration on the implementation of four-year first-degree programmes.

To be confirmed

As announced in the 2004 Policy Address, the Administration will consult the public on proposed changes to the academic structure at the senior secondary school level, and corresponding changes to the normative duration of undergraduate programmes.

6. Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) to conduct examinations outside Hong Kong

The Bills Committee on the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (Amendment) Bill 2003 requested SEM to report to the Panel of Education on how HKEAA would enforce measures to secure confidentiality of public examinations when HKEAA is about to conduct examinations outside Hong Kong.

To be confirmed

7. Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in primary schools

At the meeting on 17 November 2003, members expressed support for the implementation of the NET Scheme in primary schools and requested the Administration to review the performance of NETs in primary schools with a view to developing a long-term strategy for the provision of NETs in schools.

To be confirmed

The Administration said that a systematic evaluation on the performance of the primary NET Scheme was underway. The Administration will revert to the Panel when the evaluation report is available.

8. Regulation of private schools offering non-formal curriculum (PSNFCs)

At the meeting on 15 December 2003, members suggested that the Administration should explore the feasibility to establish an industry compensation fund for providing compensation to students in the event of closure of PSNFCs.

To be confirmed

The Administration will provide relevant information for members' reference as soon as possible.

9. Future developments in the higher education sector

At the meeting on 30 January 2004, UGC briefed members on the matter. Members agreed to revisit the issue and consult the views of stakeholders and members of the public at a future meeting. To be confirmed

10. Bullying and violence in schools

Items proposed by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong. At the meeting on 30 January 2004, members agreed to discuss the item on 16 February 2004 16 February 2004

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 February 2004

Panel on Education
List of follow-up actions
(position as at 12 February 2004)

Subject	Date of meeting	Follow-up action required	Administration's response
<p>1. <u>Loans to non-profit-making international schools</u></p> <p>1.1 Review of the policy on financial assistance to schools operated by the English Schools Foundation (ESF)</p>	<p>26.11.99 (Finance Committee)</p>	<p>The Administration agreed to report the outcome of the review to the Panel in due course.</p>	<p>Response awaited.</p> <p><u>Latest position</u> Current per class subsidy has already been frozen at the 1999-2000 school year price level. The Administration is reviewing the subsidy policy on ESF taking into account the prevailing financial stringency of Government, cost-effectiveness of ESF's operation and the interests of parents and students.</p>
<p>2. <u>Further expansion of the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme (NLS)</u></p> <p>2.1 Risk-adjusted factor and repayment period</p>	<p>19.6.00</p>	<p>The Panel requested the Administration to review the risk-adjusted factor and the repayment period of NLS in the light of members' comments at the meeting.</p>	<p>Response awaited.</p> <p><u>Latest position</u> The Administration is considering the possibility of outsourcing NLS to the private sector.</p>

Subject	Date of meeting	Follow-up action required	Administration's response
<p>3. <u>Briefing on the Higher Education Review</u></p> <p>3.1 Institutional governance and staff grievances</p>	<p>2.12.02</p>	<p>The University Grants Committee (UGC) agreed to provide an update on the development of an internal grievances and complaint mechanism in UGC-funded tertiary institutions at an appropriate time.</p>	<p>Response awaited.</p> <p><u>Latest position</u> The institutions are at various stages of reviewing their governance and management structures, including their internal grievances and complaint mechanisms. The Administration will provide an update in due course.</p>
<p>4. <u>Enhanced School Development and Accountability</u></p> <p>4.1 Implementation of the enhanced school development and accountability (SDA) framework</p>	<p>28.4.03</p>	<p>The Administration agreed to provide an interim report on the results of implementation by the end of the 2003-04 school year.</p>	<p>Response awaited.</p> <p><u>Latest position</u> Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) will conduct External School Review to 100 schools from February to June 2004. An interim report on the results of implementation of the SDA framework will be prepared by the end of the 2003-04 school year.</p> <p>The development of SDA is to be based on on-going review, consultation with schools and the establishment of</p>

Subject	Date of meeting	Follow-up action required	Administration's response
			<p>protocols. With a phase-in approach in the implementation of SDA, schools' capacity for evaluating their own performance will be strengthened, and school operation will become more transparent and accountable.</p>
<p>5. <u>Study on teaching in small classes</u></p> <p>5.1 Strategies and practices of variable group teaching</p>	<p>16.6.03</p>	<p>The Administration undertook to provide details of the good strategies and practices, the particulars of the schools practising variable group teaching and the interim review on the proposed study on effective group strategies of small class and other variable group teaching in primary schools.</p>	<p>Response awaited.</p> <p><u>Latest Position</u> The Administration will revert to the Panel on the findings of the first stage of the study and the way forward on second stage of the Study on 16 February 2004.</p>
<p>6. <u>Results of the 2003 Language Proficiency Assessment for teachers</u></p> <p>6.1 Options for upgrading the quality of English teachers</p>	<p>23.6.03</p>	<p>The Panel requested the Administration to explore workable options for upgrading the quality of English teachers and provide a paper in October 2003.</p>	<p>Response awaited.</p> <p><u>Latest Position</u> The Hong Kong Institute of Education has introduced preparation courses for Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers since August 2003. More would be organized from September 2003 to January 2004. A paper to</p>

Subject	Date of meeting	Follow-up action required	Administration's response
			report details will be prepared soon.

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12 February 2004