



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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23 April 2014

Miss Polly YEUNG  
Clerk to Panel  
Legislative Council Panel on Education  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Miss YEUNG,

**Legislative Council Panel on Education**  
**Issues related to cessation of operation of kindergartens**

I refer to your letter of 9 April 2014 to the Secretary for Education on the above subject. Our response to the issues raised by Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN is as follows:

We understand that the planned cessation of operation of individual kindergartens (KGs) due to unsuccessful renewal of tenancy agreement has aroused public concern recently. In fact, we have, as always, been closely following up on the incident, providing support and appealing for concerted effort of the whole KG sector to render assistance to the parents and students concerned. Specifically, upon knowing that a KG (including a KG-cum-child care centre run by the same operator) in Yuen Long District might cease operation, the Education Bureau (EDB) has reminded the KG to explore different means (e.g. to negotiate with the landlord about the feasibility of the tenancy renewal) to allow sufficient time for the affected parents to make transitional arrangements. The EDB has also provided the KG concerned

with information about vacant premises left by other closed KGs in the district and urged the school to prepare vacancy information in other KGs for dissemination at meetings with parents. Ever since the KG informed the affected parents about the planned cessation of operation, the EDB has been in close liaison with the KG to assist in the follow-up work, and responded to all enquiries by phone or emails. The EDB has also held a meeting with the principal concerned to brief her of EDB's support services. Besides, the Secretary for Education and the Under Secretary for Education have separately had meetings with the principal and parent representatives.

The EDB is liaising with all KGs in Yuen Long District, urging them to finalize their class structures for the next school year and update vacancy information as soon as possible. Meanwhile, we are also gauging their views on setting up an online platform for disseminating vacancy information to parents making reference to the arrangements of KGs in the North and Tai Po Districts. If a consensus can be reached, parents of affected students will be informed accordingly.

As regards the proposal of temporary use of a vacant primary school premises for the continued operation of the KG concerned, we must stress that it is an established practice for KGs which fail to have their tenancy agreements renewed to identify suitable premises in the market for continuous operation if they wish to do so. Moreover, in view of the increasing primary school age population, the said vacant school premises has been reserved for primary school purpose. Hence, the suggestion of using the vacant school premises temporarily is not feasible. The EDB has explained this in detail to the KG earlier.

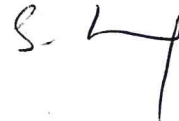
It is worth noting that underpinned by its private, flexible and diverse nature, the KG sector is responsive to the needs of parents. Every year, there are new KGs as well as closure of KGs in Hong Kong in response to the change in district demand and supply of school places. We would like to reiterate that it is inappropriate to provide school premises to private independent KGs which have all along been operating in private premises. In fact, tenancy arrangements of KG premises are solely business deals between the KG and the landlord, which should be handled by the parties concerned. The Government should not and could not intervene. All along, for private independent KGs which fail to have their tenancy agreements for the existing premises renewed for continuous educational service, they would identify suitable premises in the market on their own. That notwithstanding, we understand that the KG concerned is trying to identify suitable premises to continue its operation. We have, upon the principal's special request, provided her with factual information on the locations of closed KGs in recent years. This, however, should not be regarded as a proposal for reprovisioning.



The Committee on Free Kindergarten Education (the Committee) set up in April 2013 is actively studying various issues relating to free KG education which include, among others, KG premises and rentals. In view of the intricacies of the issues involved, the Committee must be prudent in considering how to provide more support to KGs regarding their premises, and has to devise a reasonable and practicable mechanism to ensure proper use of public funds. In this connection, the Committee will continue to listen to different opinions and make detailed recommendations in the final report to be submitted in 2015.

For further enquiries, please contact Ms Bianca WONG at 3107 2084.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wong', with a stylized flourish at the end.

( Ms Sophia WONG )  
for Secretary for Education