

Subcommittee on Children's Rights

List of follow-up actions arising from the discussion at the meetings on 20, 25 March and 20 April 2017

The Subcommittee has requested the Government to provide the following information with reference to the Subcommittee on Children's Rights' meetings held on 20, 25 March and 20 April 2017 –

Education Bureau's response

1. Review of the Education System

- 1.1 As pointed out by the Commission on Prevention of Student Suicide (CPSS), data revealed that complex factors interacted and contributed to students' suicidal behaviours. The triggers behind each case were also different, including mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety disorder), psychological concerns (e.g. negative thinking), family/peer relationship, family- /school-related adjustment difficulties and academic pressure etc. Most cases were preceded by warning signs, which was consistent with findings from international studies. We should avoid over-simplifying the cause of suicidal behaviours to a single factor (e.g. education system), and overlooking other important factors affecting the students, leading to failure to devise timely intervention and responsive measures and hence missing the opportunities to help the students by means of effective intervention. In addition, many past researches had indicated that if the media attributed suicidal behaviours to a particular cause, it was possible that the more vulnerable adolescents would identify themselves with those who attempted suicide and mistakenly considered suicide as a way to solve their problems.
- 1.2 Regarding the education system, the Final Report of the CPSS recommended to review the relevant domains of the education system in order to strengthen the support and protect students and young people from the risks of suicide. These include strengthening students' ability to handle stress, recognition of non-academic achievements in the education system as a whole and the development of students' talents and abilities in different fields.

- 1.3 The Education Bureau (EDB) continues to review the different domains of the education system as appropriate. In recent years, in order to reduce the pressure on students arising from study, the EDB has been striving to trim, enhance or update curriculum contents and assessment arrangements, clarify the breadth and depth of subject curricula; implement School-based Assessment in fewer subjects and improve its implementation, increase the flexibility in deploying lesson time to reduce teacher workload; arrange accreditation of more Applied Learning courses under the Qualifications Framework and increase opportunities for industrial attachment; encourage students interested in vocational training or joining the workforce to study up to two Applied Learning courses; provide more diversified articulation pathways for students; and encourage universities to admit students who have outstanding performance outside the academic area, etc. As announced in the 2017 Policy Address, there will be various measures to provide multiple pathways and further study opportunities for young people, so that they can develop according to their capabilities and interests.

2. Abolishment of Primary 3 TSA

- 2.1 As part of the review of the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA), the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (the Committee) and its working groups have studied in detail the purpose, function, implementation situation, different administrative arrangements and reporting formats of TSA (e.g. conducting the assessment in alternate years or on a sampling basis, providing only territory-wide reports or parent reports, etc). The Committee reaffirms the intent and value of the establishment of TSA, and recognises the functional use of TSA data to provide feedback to learning and teaching.
- 2.2 The Committee has been concerned about the situation of over-drilling. Various measures under the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (2016 Tryout Study) were devised to eliminate the incentives for over-drilling, including improving the assessment papers and question design, enhancing school reports, strengthening professional support measures and including a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation. Feedback from participating schools and their parents was positive.

- 2.3 According to the stakeholders' views collected from the various channels, the improved assessment papers and question design could align with the requirements of basic competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum and address students' learning needs. As such, students are able to acquire basic competencies in their daily learning without the need of extra preparation or over-drilling specifically for TSA. In this connection, the improved assessment papers and question design has effectively eliminated the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA.
- 2.4 Based on the positive feedback of the 2016 Tryout Study, EDB, with reference to the Committee's recommendations, announced in January 2017 introducing the 2017 Primary 3 Basic Competency Assessment Research Study which would be extended to all primary schools. The study is not a "resumption" of the previous TSA. The data obtained will not be used to evaluate the performance of schools. Extra drilling carried out by school will not be necessary. The study includes a basket of targeted complementary measures and resources to supplement the use of assessment data and effective feedback which can enhance the overall effectiveness of learning and teaching to benefit students. The aim of the study is to allow more schools to participate and understand the new initiatives of the 2016 Tryout Study, and to collect feedback from schools and different stakeholders in a more comprehensive manner. Early this year, an initiative on "Opposing excessive drilling and making good use of assessment to provide feedback to learning and teaching" jointly launched by the Chairman of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation and District Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations received positive response from school sponsoring bodies, school councils and school heads associations. This indicates a clear consensus among different stakeholders on opposing meaningless, repetitive and mechanical drills and making concerted efforts to promote the healthy development of students with their learning needs as the prime consideration.
- 2.5 EDB and the Committee would listen to the views of various parties and continue to review and enhance the arrangements of Basic Competency Assessments.

3. Homework

- 3.1 In the updated “Basic Education Curriculum Guide – To sustain, deepen and focus on learning to learn (Primary 1-6)” in 2014, EDB reiterated that schools should place due emphases on whole-person development of students and ensure they have sufficient time to rest and spare time to participate in other meaningful social or extra-curricular activities; to do physical exercises or play; to develop personal interests, and also establish good relationships with their family members, peers and friends to develop a healthy lifestyle.
- 3.2 In the EDB Circular 18/2015 "Guidelines on Homework and Tests in Schools – No Drilling, Effective Learning" issued to schools in 2015, EDB also reiterated that it is the quality rather than quantity of homework that counts. Schools are urged to review their homework policy based on their school context and students’ needs. Schools should formulate an appropriate school-based homework policy and coordinate the daily amount of homework at different class levels. Time within lessons should be arranged as far as possible for students to complete part of their homework under teachers’ guidance. Teachers should exercise their professional knowledge to handle homework issues according to students’ levels, needs and abilities. Exercises which focus mainly on mechanical drilling, repeated copying and rote learning should be avoided. Besides, schools should provide timely information to parents about the school homework policy and types of homework, and also consult parents to seek their views on further improvement of the school-based homework policy.
- 3.3 Under the principles of transparency and effective communication, parents are encouraged to maintain good communication with schools, and express their views directly to the schools. The latter could in turn respond more readily to parents’ views and requests on homework arrangements. Through different channels and means (including inspections, school visits and daily contact etc.), EDB would remind schools of the need for providing timely information through school websites and Parent Teacher Association talks to explain to parents the school homework policy and maintain close communication with parents. Schools are reminded to review their school-based policy and practices regularly. Professional advice, support and reports on school practices and students’ learning needs will be provided by EDB to

facilitate schools' self-improvement and continuous development.

4. Life Education

4.1 EDB has always attached great importance to strengthening students' ability to cope with adversity and enhancing their respect for life. Since 2001, moral and civic education (MCE) aiming to cultivate students' positive values and attitudes has been promoted as one of the Four Key Tasks for the curriculum reform in schools. In consideration of schools' vision and students' learning needs, schools could implement MCE through providing diversified learning opportunities, such as school assemblies, life education periods, class teacher periods and life-wide learning activities to foster students' whole-person development. Moreover, the content of life education, such as "understand life", "cherish life", "respect life" and "explore life", has already been incorporated into different learning themes under the school curriculum. For example, themes on "respect life" and "sanctity of life" have been included in the Life and Society Curriculum at the junior secondary level. The meaning of "life and death" can be explored in Ethics and Religious Studies at the senior secondary level. In undertaking Liberal Studies at the senior secondary level, students can understand their personal strengths and weaknesses, and learn how to manage stress and frustration and how to make decisions under the pressure of challenges for a positive and meaningful life.

4.2 To facilitate the implementation of life education at schools, EDB has provided schools with online resources as well as diversified and practical learning materials, including "Life Event Exemplars" based on students' daily life experiences. Moreover, EDB has been organising professional development programmes and learning communities for teachers, with a view to helping schools in formulating their school-based life education curriculum as needed and facilitating teachers' acquisition of teaching strategies and skills necessary for effective implementation of life education, which aims at helping students develop positive values and attitudes and enhance their resilience.

5. Support for non-Chinese speaking students' learning of Chinese: "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" and Support to Schools

- 5.1 The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students' integration into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. EDB has put in place a series of measures announced in the 2014 Policy Address to step up the support for NCS students' effective learning of Chinese and to create an inclusive learning environment in schools.
- 5.2 Starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has implemented the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" ("Learning Framework") in primary and secondary schools. The "Learning Framework" aims to help NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language with a view to facilitating their effective learning of Chinese and enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes. The additional annual provision to schools has been significantly increased to about \$200 million to facilitate schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework" and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools (all schools admitting 10 or more NCS students are provided with an additional funding ranging from \$800,000 to \$1,500,000 per year).
- 5.3 To facilitate schools' implementation of the "Learning Framework", EDB has provided practical tools and steps, and second language learning reference materials by phases prior to the start of the 2014/15 school year, including Second Language Learning Packages covering the Chinese Language curriculum at primary and secondary levels that have been distributed to schools and students in Hong Kong in the form of textbooks. Other resources such as the "Chinese Language Assessment Tools" in conjunction with the "Learning Framework", and teaching reference materials have been uploaded onto EDB's webpage and will be continually updated.
- 5.4 EDB will review the "Learning Framework" on an on-going basis and refine them in due course having due regard to views and experience in different school contexts. At the curriculum level, the "Learning Framework" would be reviewed, as appropriate, at an interval of 3 years upon completion of each Key Stage (e.g. Primary 1 to 3, Primary 4 to 6, Secondary 1 to 3).
- 5.5 EDB has been organising diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes for teachers since June

2014 to help schools implement the “Learning Framework”, and ensure that all teachers are provided with adequate training opportunities to enhance their professional capability in teaching Chinese as a second language. The results of the evaluation survey affirmed that participating teachers were satisfied with the seminars and workshops organised by EDB and considered them effective in helping teachers adapt the Chinese Language curriculum with reference to the “Learning Framework” and the “Chinese Language Assessment Tools” and adopt appropriate learning and teaching strategies. Besides, EDB launched in 2014 the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” under the Language Fund to encourage continual professional development of serving Chinese Language teachers and enhance their professional capability in teaching the Chinese language to NCS students.

- 5.6 EDB has been providing diversified school-based professional support services to schools admitting NCS students. These include on-site support provided by EDB professional support teams as well as the University-School Support Programmes (USP), the Professional Development Schools Scheme (PDS) and the School Support Partners (Seconded Teacher) (SSP) Scheme, with a view to enhancing teachers’ professional capacity and helping NCS students learn the Chinese language more effectively, as well as facilitating experience sharing among schools through development of professional learning communities.

6. Teaching of Chinese Language by Putonghua for NCS students

- 6.1 EDB has been organising diversified and progressively advanced professional development programmes (PDPs) for teachers to enhance their professional capability in teaching Chinese as a second language. Teachers can apply the knowledge and pedagogies acquired in the PDPs to their Chinese Language classes, regardless of whether the medium of instruction (MOI) is Cantonese or Putonghua. Having regard to their own circumstances, schools may flexibly use learning and teaching resources provided by EDB to develop their school-based curriculum and adapt learning materials based on the learning needs of NCS students to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

- 6.2 EDB has no plan to require schools to adopt Cantonese or Putonghua as the MOI in Chinese Language teaching for NCS students taking into account the diverse aspirations of parents (including NCS parents) towards their children's learning. Schools may use Cantonese or Putonghua as the MOI having regard to their own needs and circumstances and provide appropriate learning support to NCS students. EDB will continue to collect views from various stakeholders and the learning and teaching experience in different school contexts to understand what factors may affect NCS students' learning. We will refine the curriculum and support measures in due course.

7. Support for the NCS Students with Special Educational Needs

- 7.1 Under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, all schools have the obligation to admit NCS students with special educational needs (SEN). To support public sector ordinary schools to cater for their students (including NCS students) with SEN, EDB has been providing schools with additional resources on top of the regular subvention for all ordinary schools, professional support and teacher training. Schools can deploy school resources flexibly to employ additional teachers or teaching assistants as well as hire professional services to enhance the learning effectiveness of students with SEN.
- 7.2 Under the prevailing "Early Identification and Intervention Programme for Primary One Students with Learning Difficulties" which has been implemented in all public sector primary schools, EDB provides schools with tools and training to help them identify as early as possible Primary One students (including NCS students) with learning difficulties and arrange for early intervention. To assist teachers in identifying NCS students in need of attention, we have provided them with a guideline which sets out the points to note and factors to consider for identifying NCS students with SEN. Besides, we have published an information leaflet on the programme in seven ethnic minority languages for distribution to parents through schools to enable NCS parents to have a better understanding of the purpose and operation of this programme. The relevant information has been uploaded to EDB's website for public access.
- 7.3 In addition, the professional staff of EDB pay regular visits to schools to render professional advice on their support policies and

measures, teaching strategies, resource deployment, etc. EDB also provides schools with professional support through assessment and consultation services of educational psychologists, speech therapists and audiologists to help schools cater for students (including NCS students) with SEN.

7.4 To enhance teachers' professional capacity in catering for students (including NCS students) with SEN, EDB has been providing structured training courses on catering for students with SEN, pitched at Basic, Advanced and Thematic levels, for serving teachers since the 2007/08 school year. The content of training courses includes how to cater for the educational needs of NCS students and the related services for them.

7.5 As special schools are operating with better teacher-student ratio with class size ranging from 8 to 15 students per class, they will in general, apart from adoption of ordinary curriculum / adapted ordinary curriculum or special education curriculum for students with intellectual disability, design individual education plans to cater for the special needs of individual students (including NCS students) to help them handle their learning or emotional and behavioural problems. Besides, different types of special schools are provided with additional teachers and specialist staff for provision of diversified support services for students.

8. On Kindergartens' Refusal of Admitting NCS Children

8.1 Under the Free Quality Kindergarten (KG) Education Policy, all KGs joining the Free Quality KG Education Scheme (the Scheme) must comply with the guidelines and/or standing administrative directives on admission arrangements including the annual circular on admission arrangements issued by EDB to ensure equal opportunities for NCS students in KG admission. The requirements concerned include:

- (i) The school-based admission mechanism and procedures should be fair, just and open, and in compliance with the existing legislation (including the anti-discrimination ordinances such as Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO)) as well as circulars and guidelines issued by EDB;
- (ii) KGs are required to provide equal opportunities for all children (regardless of their race, gender and ability) including proper

handling of applications for admission from NCS parents and students notwithstanding the differences in their culture and customs;

- (iii) KGs are required to inform parents of the details of their school-based admission mechanism in advance through effective channels (for example, guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, school website, etc.). Relevant information announced by KGs and the application forms should be in both Chinese and English; and
 - (iv) KGs may, as necessary, arrange interpretation and/or translation service for applicants, for example, the interpretation and/or translation service for major ethnic minority languages provided by the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER) funded by the Home Affairs Department. Alternatively, KGs may allow parents to be accompanied by Chinese-speaking relatives/friends during the interview so as to facilitate communication.
- 8.2 For the briefing sessions on admission arrangements organised by EDB, representatives from the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) are invited to brief KGs on the key points to note under RDO in admission arrangements.
- 8.3 To facilitate NCS parents' understanding of the admission arrangements, EDB will continue to collaborate with non-governmental organisations to organise briefing sessions with simultaneous interpretation services, as appropriate, on admission arrangements for nursery (K1) classes in KGs for NCS parents. In addition, information on admission arrangements (such as leaflet on admission arrangements for K1 classes in KGs, application form and guidance notes on application for Registration Certificate for KG Admission, etc.) are prepared in major ethnic minority languages for NCS parents.
- 8.4 Starting from the 2017/18 school year, for NCS students having genuine difficulties in admission to KGs, parents may seek assistance from EDB. We will make referrals as appropriate to KGs which have joined the Scheme and which have vacancies.
- 8.5 Besides, under the new policy, we will enhance the support to KGs admitting NCS students. KGs joining the Scheme, irrespective of

the number of NCS students admitted, may apply for joining the school-based support programmes, and relevant training provided by EDB. An additional grant comparable to the salary of one teacher will also be provided for KGs admitting eight or more NCS students.

9. School Uniform Matters for Students with Different Cultural, Religious and Racial Backgrounds

- 9.1 The School Administration Guide of the Education Bureau has reminded schools to make reference to the Guide on “Racial Equality and School Uniform” issued by the EOC when drawing up school rules relating to school uniform. Schools should adopt an open attitude, respect students of different cultural, religious and racial backgrounds, and reasonably accommodate their needs. A balance has to be struck between the school community as a whole and students requiring accommodation.
- 9.2 EDB will continue to collaborate with the EOC to raise the cultural sensitivity of schools specifically in handling cultural and religious differences to create an inclusive learning environment in schools.

10. Support for Children with Hearing Impairment

- 10.1 The Government is adopting a “dual-track” approach in special education. Subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and consent of parents, EDB would refer children with severe or profound hearing loss or those who cannot construct knowledge because of inadequate speech ability to schools for children with hearing impairment (HI) to receive intensive support services. Children with lesser degree of hearing loss can benefit from ordinary schools. With the use of amplification devices, the hearing abilities of these students are enhanced, and they are able to learn and communicate with people orally in general.
- 10.2 EDB has all along been encouraging teachers to adopt the most appropriate mode to teach and to communicate with students with HI having regard to the abilities and needs of students. Taking into account the abilities of students, as well as their learning and communication needs, special schools (including HI schools) would adopt the most appropriate modes (including oral, sign and total communication, etc.) for teaching students with HI. Special school teachers would also train students with HI to use their

residual hearing for listening oral language in order to help them master the skills in communicating with other people with HI or hearing people. For students with HI attending ordinary schools, with the use of amplification devices, they are able to learn and communicate with people orally. Having regard to the abilities and needs of students, teachers will use oral language with the support of visual strategies, contextual cues, body language, written text and gestures, etc. to enhance the effectiveness of comprehension and learning of students.

- 10.3 To help ordinary schools cater for students with SEN (including students with HI), EDB has been providing schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training. Schools should pool and deploy these school-based resources flexibly to cater for the specific needs of their SEN students (including those with HI). School could utilize the Learning Support Grant and other school resources to employ teaching assistants (including people who are hearing impaired or who know sign language) to assist students with HI, and to procure school-based speech therapy services for providing students with HI with regular training. School could also provide students and parents with normal hearing the opportunities to learn sign language in the form of extra-curricular activities or interest groups, and to arrange sign interpretation services on the basis of individual needs.
- 10.4 EDB would also refer students with HI in need to the Enhanced Support Service for HI Students Attending Ordinary Schools (ESS). Under the ESS commissioned by EDB, experienced resource teachers (RTs) from HI schools will provide after-school support to students with HI. RTs will also pay school visits to provide support to the students. When necessary, RTs would use sign language to assist the learning of students and would share with the home-school teachers on how to use sign language to assist teaching.
- 10.5 To cater for needs of students with SEN, EDB has all along been providing serving teachers with structured training courses, pitched at Basic, Advanced and Thematic levels. The module on Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs of the Advanced and Thematic courses covers the use of sign language to assist teaching. The Sign Language Teaching Resource Centre of the Lutheran School for the Deaf (an HI school) would also conduct sign language training courses for schools and parents regularly. EDB

encourages schools, having regard to the needs of their HI students, to arrange teachers and teaching assistants to attend sign language courses offered by the HI school or other organisations.

11. Support to Newly Arrived Children

11.1 EDB provides public sector schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools admitting newly-arrived Children (NAC) with the School-Based Support Scheme Grant. Schools can use the grant flexibly to provide school-based support services for NAC, such as providing supplementary lessons on the Chinese/English subject and other subjects, designing school-based curriculum, procuring resource materials and organising guidance programmes, etc., to facilitate their early integration into schools. In parallel, those NAC entering mainstream schools can also attend free of charge the 60-hour Induction Programme run by non-governmental organisations with the subsidy of EDB, which covers personal development, social adaptation and basic learning skills, etc., to help them cope with adjustment problems and learning difficulties which they may encounter when they newly join the local education system. Besides, NAC may choose to attend the full-time six-month Initiation Programme prior to admission to mainstream schools, which provides learning experience in local classroom, facilitating their integration into the local education system.

12. Education for Non-local Children and Children Holding a Form of Recognizance in Hong Kong

12.1 Children who have no legal right to remain in Hong Kong will not be allowed to attend schools in Hong Kong and will be repatriated. For children of refugees liable to removal but holding a form of recognizance issued by the Director of Immigration, consideration may be given on a case-by-case basis to allow them to receive education temporarily. EDB will provide placement assistance as appropriate having regard to their district of residence, learning level, age, etc. Children concerned may also apply directly to schools for admission. Schools should refer the applications to the EDB for further action. EDB will seek the comments of the Immigration Department. Upon confirmation from the Immigration Department that it has no comments on allowing these children to attend schools in Hong Kong during the time when these cases are still under investigation, EDB will inform schools

to admit these children or arrange school places for them.

13. Internet Learning Support Programme

- 13.1 The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) launched the 5-year Internet Learning Support Programme (the Programme) in 2011 to help students from low-income families undertake web-based learning at home. Target beneficiaries of the Programme are families receiving the flat-rate grant for school-related expenses under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, and families passing the means test of the Student Finance Office (SFO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency and receiving full or half subsidy rate under the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges (SIA).
- 13.2 The Programme includes offering computer equipment, including desktop, notebook and tablet computers, monitors and printers at discounted prices for purchase by eligible families; and providing free technical support and computer checking services (regardless of whether the computer is purchased through the Programme) and free training and support to students and parents. The Programme also offers home broadband services at concessionary prices, including 8Mbps home broadband services (sufficient to stream 1080p or even 4K videos and for web-based learning purpose) at an annual fee of \$900 (or a monthly fee of \$75), and 30Mbps/100Mbps home broadband services at an annual fee of \$1,176 (or a monthly fee of \$98).
- 13.3 With endorsement from the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting of the Legislative Council, OGCIO has extended the Programme for two years up to the end of the 2017/18 school year. It is estimated that about 452 000 times of services would have been delivered to about 67 000 eligible families throughout the implementation period of the Programme.
- 13.4 The Social Welfare Department and SFO have implemented the SIA to provide cash subsidy on a household basis to eligible families to relieve their financial burden of providing internet access for their children to undertake web-based learning at home. In the 2016/17 school year, the full subsidy rate for each eligible family is \$1,400 and that of the half subsidy rate is \$700. In the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years (as at 31 January 2017), SFO has disbursed 155 million and 148 million under SIA to about

148 000 and 130 000 families respectively.

14. Support Students to Participate in After-school Activities

14.1 To support needy students to participate in after-school activities with a view to facilitating their whole-person and all-round development, EDB has implemented the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes (Programme) since the 2005/06 school year. Currently, schools and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are provided with the School-based Grant and Community-based Project Grant respectively to organise after-school activities for eligible students, i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students in receipt of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or full grant under the Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Schemes. To enhance the opportunity of needy students to participate in after-school activities, EDB has, starting from the 2014/15 school year, among other arrangements, increased the discretionary quota for participating schools under the Programme from 10% to 25% to benefit more students who are not in receipt of CSSA or full grant of SFA but identified by schools as needy. Besides, eligible participating schools (i.e. having a utilization rate of 80% or above of the provision in the previous year) have been provided with incentive funding under the School-based Grant (which is calculated at an annual rate of \$600 per eligible student vis-à-vis \$400 in other schools and includes an additional 25% of the provision).

14.2 In the 2016/17 school year, the total funding earmarked for the Programme is about \$240 million, including about \$118 million for the School-based Grant and about \$122 million for the Community-based Project Grant. For the School-based Grant, 896 schools which constitute about 90% of all the schools in the territory with 217 120 eligible students qualified for the grant have participated in the Programme. Regarding the Community-based Project Grant, the 510 projects organised by 173 NGOs are targeted at individual eligible students totaling about 103 000. The provision of the Programme is complementary in nature. Apart from the Programme, the Government has launched various funding schemes to support schools and NGOs to organise after-school activities including after-school tutorial services to cater for the diverse needs of needy students. Besides, flexible deployment of the grants provided, as encouraged by EDB, has enabled schools to inject more funding into after-school activities for needy

students.

- 14.3 The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund has been jointly established by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (the Trust) and the EDB since 2002 to subsidise the financially needy students to participate in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised by schools for whole-person development. Eligible students under the Fund are the primary and secondary students from families in receipt of CSSA or receiving full grant under the SFA Schemes or those who meet the schools' established "financially needy" criteria (e.g. students receiving half grant under the SFA Schemes, newly-arrived children, single parent households). Schools may use the funding to subsidise eligible students for covering the costs incurred in life-wide learning activities such as transport fees and admission fees for visits, expenses on purchasing musical instruments and study tours outside Hong Kong, etc. Over the past three school years, more than 930 schools have participated in this funding scheme each year and more than 210 000 students have benefitted on average.

Food and Health Bureau's response

1. Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Specialist Out-patient Clinics

- 1.1 The Hospital Authority (HA) has implemented a triage system at its Child & Adolescent (C&A) psychiatric specialist out-patient clinics (SOPC) for all new referrals to ensure patients with urgent conditions requiring early intervention are treated with priority. Under the current triage system, referrals of new patients are triaged into Priority 1 (urgent), Priority 2 (semi-urgent) and Routine (stable) categories. HA's targets are to maintain the median waiting time for cases in Priority 1 and 2 categories within two weeks and eight weeks respectively. HA has all along been able to keep the median waiting time of Priority 1 and Priority 2 cases within this pledge. The waiting time for new cases in non-urgent and stable condition is relatively longer as more patients are under this category. In 2016-17 (as at 31 December 2016), the median waiting time for new cases in Routine category at C&A psychiatric SOPCs was 68 weeks. If a patient's mental condition deteriorates before the appointment, he or she could request the psychiatric SOPC concerned for re-assessment to determine whether his/her original appointment should be advanced. The patient may also consider seeking medical treatment from Accident & Emergency Department, where HA will provide appropriate services accordingly.

Home Affairs Bureau's response

1. BMX Park in Kwai Chung

- 1.1 The Hong Kong Jockey Club International BMX Park (BMX Park) is located at the restored landfill site at Gin Drinkers' Bay, Kwai Chung. In 2005, the Cycling Association of Hong Kong, China (CAHK) applied to the Government for the use of the site as a BMX Park. The application was approved in 2008 and the site was granted to the CAHK under a land licence of 21 years. Since its opening in 2009, the BMX Park has been managing and operating by the CAHK on a self-financing basis. Relevant government departments have been monitoring the use of the land in accordance with the land licence and maintaining close contact with CAHK on the service conditions of the BMX Park.
- 1.2 In order to improve the conditions of some of the facilities in the BMX Park, the CAHK has invited tenders for two rounds for carrying out maintenance works in November 2016 and January 2017 respectively. The first round of the tender exercise was cancelled as no tender was received due to no response, and prices of the tenders received in the second round are above the estimated contract sum. CAHK is now considering the scope of works and the way forward in the light of the latest tender exercise.
- 1.3 Regarding the future operations of the BMX Park, we understand that the CAHK would like to maintain its management and operational roles. It is actively seeking cooperation opportunities with partners in the commercial sector with a view to enhancing the quality of service. The CAHK advised that the closure of the competition track is a temporary measure to allow room for seeking professional advice and for conducting the tendering exercise of the maintenance works. The Government has urged the CAHK to keep the stakeholders informed of the schedule of temporary closure so as to avoid inconvenience caused to potential users. The Government will keep contact with the CAHK and to provide advice and assistance as appropriate.

Labour and Welfare Bureau/Social Welfare Department's response

1. Insufficient payment rates under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), child poverty, implementing remedial measures to support families and children in poverty

1.1 Social Welfare Department (SWD) takes account of the changes reflected by the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices and adjusts the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme on an annual basis. Between 2011 and 2017, SWD has, in accordance with the aforementioned mechanism, adjusted the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme upward by more than 30%. In fact, when we compare the average CSSA payment with the 25% non-CSSA households with the lowest expenditure in Hong Kong, the former is higher in all household categories. Insofar as children on CSSA are concerned, the CSSA Scheme ensures that children in need receive adequate assistance to meet their needs. The CSSA standard payment rates provided by SWD to able-bodied children are higher than able-bodied adults. In addition to the standard payment rates, school children on CSSA are entitled to a range of special grants, including grants to cover school fees, transport fares to school and examination fees, monthly meal allowance for full-day students taking lunch away from home, and a flat-rate grant for selected items of school-related expenses (i.e. books, stationery, school uniforms, miscellaneous and minor one-off expenses) in each school year. It is worth noting that starting from the 2014/15 school year, the Government has, on top of the regular adjustment mechanism, increased the grants for school-related expenses for primary and secondary students on CSSA. The current level of the relevant flat-rate grant ranges from \$1,650 to \$6,775.

2. Enhancing the Low-income Working Family Allowance (LIFA) Scheme, so as to alleviate the situation of child poverty

2.1 The Government launched the LIFA Scheme in May 2016 to provide financial assistance to non-CSSA low-income working families, and encourage self-reliance through continuous employment. To alleviate intergenerational poverty, each eligible child or youth in the family can also receive child allowance. The Government will conduct a comprehensive policy review of the LIFA Scheme in mid-2017. The design of the Scheme will be carefully and comprehensively reviewed, and comments received

from the public and concern groups on the Scheme will also be considered.

3. Preventing the occurrence of domestic violence, so as to protect children from being harmed, and early identification and support for high risk families can effectively prevent child abuse

3.1 The 65 Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) and the two Integrated Services Centres (ISCs) over the territory operated by SWD and subvented non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide a spectrum of preventive, supportive and remedial services to strengthen families' capability in caring for children, and offer assistance to improve parenting for those parents and carers who have difficulties in taking care of and parenting children. As some families in need are reluctant to seek help, IFSCs, ISCs, Family and Child Protective Services Units, and Medical Social Service Units in psychiatric setting have jointly implemented the Family Support Programme to increase connection with vulnerable families which are unmotivated to seek help to address their problems at an early stage. Through telephone calls, home visits and other outreaching services, social workers contact the families with members at the risk of domestic violence (including child abuse) or mental illness and those with problems of social isolation, and refer them to a host of support services. The service units will also recruit and train volunteers, including those with personal experience in overcoming family problems or crises, so that they can contact these families and encourage them to receive appropriate support services with a view to addressing the problems before they get worse.

4. Inadequate sign language services

4.1 SWD provides support services to hearing impaired persons (HIPs) through subventing two multi-service centres and four social and recreational centres that are run by NGOs to serve HIPs. Such services include sign language interpretation to facilitate HIPs to communicate with other people and enable them to lead an independent life in the community. Since 2014-15, SWD has provided a total annual allocation of \$2.57 million for the above six centres to hire sign language interpreters to strengthen sign language interpretation service. Besides, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the Rehabilitation Advisory

Committee under LWB released the first List of Sign Language Interpreters in Hong Kong on 30 June 2016. The list contains information of experienced sign language interpreters in Hong Kong, such as their professional qualifications, work experience and means of contact to facilitate the public (individuals or organisations) to select sign language interpreters having regard to their individual needs. LWB has informed bureaux and departments that they can make reference to the information of sign language interpreters on the list when procuring sign language interpretation service. In addition, sign language has been included in the languages domain under the reimbursable courses of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF). Currently, a total of five sign language courses offered by three training institutions have been registered as CEF reimbursable courses. Applicants who are pursuing continuing education on sign language may apply and make a claim to cover 80% of course fee(s) of such courses that he/she has successfully completed, with a ceiling of HK\$10,000.

5. Inadequate protection and enforcement of foreign domestic helpers' (FDHs) pregnancy and maternity rights

5.1 Hong Kong is one of the few places which offer the same statutory labour rights to migrant workers, including FDHs, as local workers. FDHs enjoy the same protection and benefits under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) (EO) as local workers, including maternity protection such as maternity leave with pay and employment protection. The Labour Department (LD) is fully committed to protecting the employment rights and benefits of FDHs. As a preventive measure, LD organises publicity and educational activities to raise the awareness of labour rights among FDHs and their employers through broadcasting Television and Radio Announcements in the Public Interest, widely distributing pamphlets in Chinese, English and FDHs' mother languages, placing advertisements in local Indonesian and Filipino newspapers usually read by FDHs, holding briefings and information kiosks at locations convenient to FDHs, etc. FDHs who feel aggrieved are encouraged to come forward and report their cases to LD promptly. Apart from assisting FDHs to pursue their civil claims, LD will conduct investigation and institute prosecution where there is sufficient evidence on breach of EO. In 2016, an FDH employer was convicted and fined \$8,000 for unlawful dismissal of a pregnant FDH.

6. Inadequate child care services

6.1 To further respond to the community demand for child care services, the Government will continue to implement measures to enhance child care services, including from 2015-16 onwards, increasing, by phases, the provision of Extended Hours Service by about 5 000 places at aided child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres in districts with high demand, with about 1 200 of such places provided since September 2015; and planning to provide about 100 additional aided long full-day child care places for children aged below three in Sha Tin in 2018-19. The Government also commissioned the University of Hong Kong in December 2016 to conduct a consultancy study to give advice on the long-term development of child care services.

7. Whether there are any measures to address the issue of child poverty

7.1 The Government launched the Low-income Working Family Allowance (LIFA) Scheme in May 2016 to provide financial assistance to non-Comprehensive Social Security Assistance low-income working families, and encourage self-reliance through continuous employment. To alleviate inter-generational poverty, each eligible child or youth in the family can also receive child allowance at \$800 or \$400 (depending on the income level of the family) per month per child. The Government will conduct a comprehensive policy review of the LIFA Scheme in mid-2017. The design of the LIFA Scheme will be carefully and comprehensively reviewed, and comments received from the public and concern groups on the LIFA Scheme will also be considered. Besides, the Government set up the Child Development Fund (CDF) in 2008. As a tripartite, cross-sector collaboration among the community and family, the business sector and the Government, the CDF aims to promote the longer-term development of children from disadvantaged background, and encourage them to develop an asset-building habit, with a view to alleviating inter-generational poverty.

8. Whether there are any measures to enhance the publicity for the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development

8.1 Since 2005-06, the SWD has implemented the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development through the District Social Welfare Offices to address the developmental needs of

disadvantaged children and youth aged 24 or below in the districts. Under the Scheme, the SWD has been identifying through the welfare service units under the SWD or non-governmental organisations those children and youth who receive the relevant services and have financial difficulties. The responsible caseworkers conduct assessment according to the family background, financial conditions, personal developmental needs, items requiring subsidy, etc. of these children and youth for the provision of suitable cash assistance to them. The cash assistance can be used for the following purposes: (1) learning and education needs (e.g. purchase of instruments for learning or reference books, or participation in extra-curricular learning activities etc.); (2) job skills training and employment needs; and (3) social exposure and potential development needs. The utilisation rate of the Scheme is over 90%, and the recipients of the assistance consider that the Scheme can help facilitate the personal development of children and youth.

Environment Protection Department's response

1. Marine Refuse - Inter-departmental Working Group on Clean Shorelines

1.1 The Government established the Inter-departmental Working Group on Clean Shorelines (Working Group) in November 2012 to enhance the collaboration among relevant Government departments to address marine refuse problem. In support of the Working Group, the Environmental Protection Department conducted a Marine Refuse Study (the Study) in 2013-14 to investigate the sources, distribution and movement of marine refuse. The Study revealed that more than 95% of marine refuse originated from local sources. Nevertheless, as marine refuse in the region may have an impact on the marine environment, Hong Kong and Guangdong have set up the Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Environmental Management Special Panel in October 2016 to enhance exchange and communication. In addition, relevant departments have been proactively implementing various improvement measures to tackle marine refuse problem, which include increasing cleaning frequencies, organising promotion and education activities to different target groups, as well as strengthening law enforcement etc. While the Government departments would continue to step up efforts for improving shorelines environment, we would also like to call for the public's support and participation, through changing habits to reduce waste at source and dispose of waste properly, so as to prevent refuse entering the sea.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department's response

1. Relaxing the playground regulations to allow more activities (e.g. walking dogs, cycling, picnic and ball games) to be held in parks and providing more parks and pet gardens

1.1 Walking dogs and providing more pet gardens

Under Section 12(2) of the Pleasure Grounds Regulation (Cap. 132BC), no dogs should be allowed to enter any pleasure ground where a notice prohibiting dogs is placed. Currently, except for areas in parks designated as pet gardens, dogs are not allowed to be brought into pleasure grounds under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). LCSD is open to proposals for provision of more pet gardens in leisure venues. Since the community has diverse views on the designation of venues to which the public may be allowed to bring their pets, LCSD has to balance different needs of the public and consider carefully issues relating to environmental hygiene, public health and facility management, etc. If there are suitable sites as well as support from the relevant District Councils and local communities, LCSD will open more suitable venues for provision of pet gardens. In fact, the number of pet gardens managed by LCSD has increased from 19 to 43 between 2011 and January 2017. LCSD plans to provide 4 new pet gardens in leisure venues in 2017. A list of pet gardens is set out in Annex 1.

1.2 Cycling

Cycling in parks may cause danger to other park users especially the elderly and children. Under Section 14(1) of the Pleasure Grounds Regulation (Cap. 132 BC), cycling is not allowed in public pleasure grounds except in areas set apart in the pleasure grounds by LCSD for such activities. In balancing the needs of park users and cyclists, cycling is only allowed in designated venues with cycling facilities. Currently, cycling facilities are provided in 24 pleasure grounds managed by LCSD where members of the public are welcome to participate in cycling activities. These facilities include cycling grounds, cycling tracks, children cycling areas, road safety park and skate parks. A list of cycling facilities managed by LCSD is set out in Annex 2.

1.3 Picnic and ball games

Leisure facilities including the lawns in parks managed by LCSD are provided for the enjoyment of the general public. Management measures are put in place to provide a clean and tidy as well as safe environment. Members of the public are welcome to use park facilities provided that they observe the pleasure ground regulations and would not cause obstruction to other park users. Except for amenity lawns or where notice is displayed, the public can have a rest on the lawns or use them for leisure activities.

1.4 Providing more parks

In planning new recreation and sports facilities including open space, the Government will consider such factors as the current provision of sports facilities at the territory-wide and district levels, the policy objective of sports promotion, utilisation rates of existing facilities, demographic changes, advice of District Councils, site availability and technical feasibility. In the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced a five-year plan to significantly increase the provision of recreation and sports facilities. We plan to earmark \$20 billion for launching 26 projects to develop new or improve existing sports and recreation facilities in different districts, including 20 open space projects.

2. Heavier penalty for littering on beaches

2.1 Under Section 4D of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228), law enforcement officers of LCSD are empowered to prosecute marine littering offenders. Offenders are liable to a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for 6 months. Besides, under the (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570), officers empowered to enforce the law may issue fixed penalty notices to offenders according to circumstances. The amount of penalty is \$1,500. Duty staff are deployed at beaches under the management of LCSD during the opening hours and conduct patrol every day. Announcements are also made on the beaches to remind swimmers to keep the beaches clean. With daily patrol by the staff, notices put up and announcements made to remind swimmers to keep the beaches clean, swimmers in general are very cooperative and willing to put the rubbish into litter bins.

3. Providing more swimming training courses for children

3.1 LCSD has organised different recreation and sports programmes for children (including swimming training courses) at concessionary rates to encourage their active participation. In planning the programmes and the numbers of activities (including swimming training courses for children) for the coming year, District Leisure Services Offices (DLSOs) will review the provision of programmes in the past year, taking into consideration factors such as the change in district population, the local demand including children's demand for recreation and sports programmes, the provision of recreation and sports facilities and views from the respective District Councils to ensure that the types, numbers and quality of such programmes meet the needs of the local community.

4. Concerns over the government regulation of private camps

4.1 The attendees expressed concern on the behaviour of an activity instructor and the supervision of activities organised by the Po Leung Kuk Camp (PLKC). PLKC is not under the management of LCSD and its operation does not fall within our purview. For the activities organised by the privately-run organisations in the community, the organisers are obliged to manage and monitor their activities to ensure that they are operated in compliance with the laws of Hong Kong. LCSD does not have a role to play on the regulation of these activities.

Education Bureau

Food and Health Bureau

Home Affairs Bureau

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Environment Protection Department

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Social Welfare Department

May 2017

Annex 1

**List of Leisure Venues Provided with Pet Gardens
Managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)
(as at January 2017)**

District	Location
Central and Western	1. Victoria Peak Garden
	2. Central and Western District Promenade – Sheung Wan Section
	3. Central and Western District Promenade – Central Section
	4. Cadogan Street Temporary Garden
	5. Oaklands Avenue Sitting-out Area
Wanchai	6. Tai Hang Drive Sitting-out Area
Southern	7. Sitting-out area adjoining Aberdeen Tennis and Squash Centre
	8. Ap Lei Chau Waterfront Promenade
Eastern	9. Quarry Bay Promenade
	10. Lok Man Road Pet Garden
	11. Fu Hong Street Pet Garden
	12. Tung Hei Road Sitting-out Area
	13. Hong Cheung Street Sitting-out Area
Yau Tsim Mong	14. Yau Tsim Mong Pet Garden
Kowloon City	15. Kowloon Tsai Park
	16. Hung Ling Street Sitting-out Area
Kwun Tong	17. Kwun Tong Ferry Pier Square
	18. Tai Yip Street Garden
Wong Tai Sin	19. Po Kong Village Road / Shung Wah Street Sitting-out Area
Sham Shui Po	20. Lai Chi Kok Park
	21. Butterfly Valley Road Pet Garden
Islands	22. Tung Chung North Park
Kwai Tsing	23. Cheung Wan Street Rest Garden
	24. Kwai Chung Castle Peak Road Sitting-out Area
	25. Jockey Club Hing Shing Road Playground
	26. Tai Wo Hau Road Playground
	27. Tsing Yu Street Garden
Tsuen Wan	28. Sham Tsz Street Playground
	29. Tsuen Wan Park
	30. Wo Yi Hop Road Garden
Tuen Mun	31. Hoi Wong Road Garden
	32. Lam Tei Pet Garden

District	Location
Yuen Long	33. Tin Yip Road Sitting-out Area
	34. Town Park North Children's Playground
	35. Hung Tak Road Sitting-out Area No.2
Shatin	36. Ma On Shan Sai Sha Road Pet Garden
Tai Po	37. Kwong Fuk Park
	38. Chung Nga Road Children's Playground
North	39. Po Wing Road Sitting-out Area
	40. Sheung Shui Heung Basketball Court
Sai Kung	41. Tsueng Kwan O Waterfront Park
	42. Po Lam Sitting-Out Area
	43. Wan Po Road Pet Garden

Pet Gardens Anticipated to be Completed in 2017

District	Location
Centre & Western	1. Fung Mat Road Sitting-out Area
Sham Shui Po	2. Hing Wah Street West Playground
Yau Tsim Mong	3. Pet Garden and a Model Car Play Area underneath the Flyover at Ferry Street
Tsuen Wan	4. Kwok Shui Road Park

Annex 2

**List of LCSD's Venues Provided with Cycling Facilities
(as at December 2016)**

District	Venue
Wan Chai	1. Morrison Hill Road Playground (BMX Cycling Park and Skateboard Ground)
Eastern	2. Quarry Bay Park (Cycling Track)
	3. Yee Shing Lane Temporary Sitting – out Area (Cycling Track)
	4. Siu Sai Wan Road Garden(Cycling Track)
Sham Shui Po	5. Lai Chi Kok Park (Skatepark#)
Kowloon City	6. Carpenter Road Park(Cycling Track)
Kwun Tong	7. Kung Lok Road Playground(Cycling Track)
	8. Kowloon Bay Park(Cycling Track)
Wong Tai Sin	9. Po Kong Village Road Park (Elevated Cycling Track, Cycling Area and Skatepark#)
Tuen Mun	10. Tuen Mun Park (Cycling path)
	11. Wu Shan Recreation Playground (Cycling Ground)
Tsuen Wan	12. Tsuen Wan Park (Children Cycling Area)
Kwai Tsing	13. Tsing Yi Northeast Park (Cycling track and Children Cycling Area)
Sha Tin	14. Tsing Hung Road Playground (Children Cyling Area)
	15. Siu Lek Yuen Road Playground (Adventure Cycling Area and Children Cycling Area)
	16. Sha Tin Road Safety Park*(Cycling track)
	17. University Station Cycling Entry / Exit Hub (Bicycle Practising Area)
Sai Kung	18. Hong Kong Velodrome Park (Skatepark#)
	19. Hong Kong Velodrome (Cycling Track for track bikes)
North	20. Pak Wo Road Playground(Cycling Ground)
	21. On Fuk Street Playground (Skatepark#)
	22. On Lok Mun Street Playground (Skatepark#)
	23. Sheung Shui Cycling Entry / Exit Hub (Bicycle Practising Area)
Yuen Long	24. Tin Sau Road Park (Cycling path)

Remarks:

* For bicycle with wheel size no larger than 12 inches in diameter only

For freestyle BMX, skateboarding and aggressive inline skating ac