



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

本局檔號 Our Ref. : (11) in L/M(4) to EDB(SIM)/ADM/125/26

電話 Telephone : 3540 7100

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

傳真 Fax Line : 2575 8952

7 January 2020

Ms Angel WONG
Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms WONG,

Panel on Education
Enquiry of The Hon Charles Mok on WebSAMS

I refer to your letter dated 10 December 2019.

Regarding the enquiry of the Hon Charles Mok on WebSAMS, our response is attached in the Annex.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vinci Chou'.

(Vinci Chou)

for Secretary for Education

Encl.

Enquiry of The Hon Charles Mok on WebSAMS

Response from Education Bureau

The Web-based School Administration and Management System (WebSAMS) is a web-based application system developed by the Education Bureau (EDB) to provide all public sector schools as well as local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) to assist in their administration and management processes, and to enable electronic communication between schools and EDB.

At present, WebSAMS is used by 988 schools¹ in Hong Kong. Among them, around 800 schools have WebSAMS installed on their school premises and around 200 schools have their systems migrated to a cloud platform managed by EDB. EDB provides schools with the WebSAMS software and guidelines as well as version updates from time to time. Individual schools are responsible for the daily operation and management of their WebSAMS. EDB has no right of access to schools' network and their WebSAMS. The version update of WebSAMS is also carried out by individual schools and thus, updates of WebSAMS may not be done at the same time for all schools and the versions that were in use by the schools recently being attacked were different. At present, the WebSAMS of all of the 988 schools have already been upgraded to the version released by EDB on 13 November 2019.

The WebSAMS of 9 schools were attacked in the recent incident. Among them, leakage of data was observed in 4 schools, including HKSKH Bishop Hall Secondary School, La Salle Primary School, Po Leung Kuk Ho Yuk Ching (1984) College and Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College. Since the schools can, in their sole discretion, choose which WebSAMS modules to use and determine the scope of usage in each module according to their operational needs, the types and amount of data stored in WebSAMS vary among individual schools. Examples of data which can be stored in WebSAMS include personal data of students, parents and staff, school financial information and school places allocation information. The above schools have issued notices to inform the parents and their staff the types of personal data that might have been leaked. EDB has requested the schools concerned to report the incident to the Hong Kong Police Force and notify the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD). We have also requested the schools concerned to inform the affected stakeholders as soon as possible. The schools are also required to strengthen the security of their systems according to EDB's recommendations.

¹ It includes 972 public sector schools and DSS schools and 16 private schools. The private schools bear the cost of hardware for their WebSAMS.

EDB always attaches importance to safeguarding the security of WebSAMS. Security Risk Assessment & Audit (SRAA) is conducted regularly on the WebSAMS software to enhance the security of the system. To address ever-changing cybersecurity threats, EDB stays abreast of the latest cybersecurity trends and monitors the latest security issues as well as implements corresponding measures for strengthening system security, including providing new version updates and security patches. Schools are notified and urged to perform system updates as soon as possible to safeguard their system security. On 8 November 2019, our cloud platform monitoring system detected irregularities in the WebSAMS of an aided school that has migrated to the cloud platform managed by EDB. Further checking showed that the system of the school was attacked but no data leakage was observed. Immediate actions were taken on the cloud platform to stop the attack and to protect the system from being affected. A new version of WebSAMS was released on 13 November 2019 with an urgent notice strongly advising all schools to update their WebSAMS to the new version as soon as possible.

Subsequently, several aided schools reported to EDB irregularities with their WebSAMS, and they were requested to provide system logs to EDB for analysis. After investigation, it was confirmed that their WebSAMS were attacked. The sources of all attacks originated from outside the school networks. EDB immediately arranged special teams to conduct on-site inspections and provide necessary support to the affected schools in order to strengthen system security of WebSAMS. EDB also immediately urged all schools to update WebSAMS to the latest version as soon as possible.

EDB from time to time reminds schools of the proper management of all computer system and network devices of WebSAMS. School technical support staff are reminded to review the server logs and access logs of all devices on a daily basis and be aware of any irregularities in the system, so that malicious attacks can be detected earlier to minimise the impact. To strengthen schools' awareness of cyber security, EDB also organises regular training courses on WebSAMS security for school personnel to share with them the latest information and experience on cyber security. Besides, EDB has been promoting information security in partnership with various parties, including Government Departments (the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Police Force), Government Computer Emergency Response Team Hong Kong (GovCERT.HK), teachers' associations and information technology experts. In addition, EDB has been providing all public sector schools with annual recurrent funding such as the Composite Information Technology Grant (CITG). Under the principle of school-based management, schools can flexibly deploy their resources as appropriate to meet their operational needs for IT in education, including the procurement of information security services.