



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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3 November 2021

Legislative Council Secretariat
(Attn: Ms Angel WONG)
Legislative Council Complex 1,
Legislative Council Road,
Central,
Hong Kong.

Dear Ms WONG,

Panel Education
Follow-up to the meeting on 3 September 2021

Thank you for your letter dated 6 September 2021. Responses from the Education Bureau, in Chinese and English, to the follow-up items (a) to (c) raised at the meeting of the Panel on Education on 3 September 2021 are provided in the Annex.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'YY SO'.

(Ms Y Y SO)
for Secretary for Education

**Follow-up to the meeting of
the Legislative Council Panel on Education held on 3 September 2021**

Regarding the follow-up items raised at the meeting of the Panel on Education on 3 September 2021, responses from the Education Bureau (EDB) are as follows:

Item (a):

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, face-to-face classes had been suspended in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years. Nevertheless, the subsidies received by kindergartens (KGs) were not reduced because of suspension of face-to-face classes. The basic unit subsidies were disbursed based on the number of eligible students (i.e. according to the number of Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission kept by KGs) while other school-specific grants (such as rental subsidy, premises maintenance grant and tide-over grant) were also disbursed as usual. Besides, the Government rolled out a number of support measures to all KGs (including KGs not joining the KG education scheme (Scheme)) in view of the impact of the epidemic on their operation, including:

- (i) In March and April 2020, KGs were provided with a one-off Special Anti-epidemic Grant at the rate of \$10,000 to \$15,000 per school to help them replenish their epidemic prevention equipment (such as masks and thermometers) and pay for other expenses related to epidemic prevention;
- (ii) In March and April 2020, KGs were provided with a one-off Support Grant ranging from \$60,000 to \$160,000 per school;
- (iii) Under the third round of the Anti-epidemic Fund in November 2020, KGs were provided with a One-off Grant ranging from \$30,000 to \$80,000 per school; and
- (iv) Under the fourth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund in February 2021, KGs were provided with a One-off Grant ranging from \$60,000 to \$160,000 per school.

Apart from the above, KGs not joining the Scheme could apply for subsidies under the Employment Support Scheme.

On the other hand, to support KGs to facilitate children's learning at home during suspension of face-to-face classes, the EDB issued a letter to KGs in May 2020 to introduce the principles and strategies in supporting children's learning at home. A seminar was organised in November 2020 to share the feasible strategies and experience with the sector. The EDB also implemented the Gift Book Scheme and Do It Yourself Handicraft and Learning Package Scheme (Learning Package Scheme) in December 2020. Under the Gift Book Scheme, the EDB provides a grant at a rate of \$100 per student per school year for Scheme-KGs to purchase one printed book as a gift for each student in each of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school year to encourage them to read at home. KGs would also set up a book exchange scheme for students to cultivate their reading interest. As for the Learning Package Scheme, Scheme-KGs could apply for a grant capped at \$50,000 or \$80,000 to design home learning activities which suit the abilities and interests of their students. KGs may use the grant to prepare materials and guidelines, or produce home learning packages for students so as to implement home learning programmes.

KGs' operation is on a market-driven basis. Every year, there are closures or mergers of KGs owing to a variety of factors such as profitability, tenancy and premises matters. 12 KGs had been closed starting from the 2020/21 school year, including two Scheme-KGs and two KGs merged with KGs under the same school sponsoring body. On the other hand, 10 new KGs commenced operation in that school year.

Item (b):

In the 2020/21 school year, the EDB received one complaint involving bullying in KGs.

Item (c):

Teachers play a vital role in passing on knowledge and nurturing students' character. Their words and deeds should meet the professional conduct required of them and the expectations of society. Same as primary and secondary teachers, KG teachers have to be registered under the Education Ordinance. The EDB is the authority for registration of teachers, hence has the responsibility to ensure the quality of teachers. The EDB has an established mechanism to handle all cases involving violations of teacher professional ethics. This mechanism applies to all registered teachers (including KG teachers). The EDB may cancel the registration of a teacher in accordance with the established mechanism and the Education Ordinance if the teacher concerned is found to have seriously violated professional ethics or involved in an act of misconduct, and he/she is not a fit and proper person to be a teaching staff, so as to safeguard the well-being of students, uphold the

professionalism of teachers and maintain public's confidence in education in Hong Kong.

Schools (including KGs), as employers of teachers, have the responsibility to supervise their teachers, remind them of the behaviour and conduct required as well as pro-actively follow up on the misconduct of their teachers. If a teacher is found to have committed an act of professional misconduct or misbehaved, schools should, in compliance with the Employment Ordinance, and the terms of the employment contract signed with the teacher, take appropriate follow-up actions according to the school-based mechanism.

In addition, schools as employers should adopt a stringent selection process and strengthen the management on appointment and related matters in order to guard against improper persons to be appointed as teaching and non-teaching staff. The EDB issued EDB Circular No. 7/2021 (titled "Measures for Strengthening the Protection of Students: Appointment of Teaching and Non-teaching Staff in Schools") on 16 July 2021 to update and remind all schools (including KGs) on the matters relating to the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff in schools. For instance, prior to appointment, schools should require the applicants to declare whether their registered teacher or permitted teacher status has been cancelled/refused; whether they have been convicted of any criminal offence in Hong Kong or elsewhere; whether they are involved in any ongoing criminal proceedings or investigations (including but not limited to arrest or apprehension by the police); whether they are being investigated by schools or the EDB over professional misconduct allegations; and should request prospective employees to undergo Sexual Conviction Record Check. Schools should, upon seeking the consent of the applicants, also apply to the EDB for releasing information regarding their registration status. The information released by the EDB includes whether their registered teacher or permitted teacher status has been cancelled/refused and whether they have received advisory/warning/reprimand letter in respect of their professional conduct.

Besides, the EDB will reinforce our gatekeeping role by conducting comprehensive criminal record check on all registered teachers (including KG teachers) every three years, starting from the 2021/22 school year. The purposes are to identify any unreported information during the period when registered teachers are not in active service and to prevent intentional and unintentional omissions, for further safeguarding the well-being of students.