

**Secondary School Places Allocation System 2009/2011
(For Admission to Secondary 1 in September 2011)
Frequently Asked Questions**

Discretionary Places

(1) Q What are discretionary places (DP)?

A DP are Secondary 1 (S1) places reserved by secondary schools for admission of students at their own discretion. Government, aided and caput secondary schools may reserve not more than 30%, and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Secondary Schools participating in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System may reserve more than 30% of their S1 places as DP.

(2) Q What are the procedures of applying for a DP?

A The DP application period for this cycle is from 3 January (Monday) to 24 January 2011 (Monday). All participating secondary schools accept applications within the same period.

Parents of participating Primary 6 (P6) students of the current cycle will receive two copies of Application Form for S1 Discretionary Place through their children's primary schools in early December 2010. Students not studying in participating primary schools can obtain the Application Forms from the School Places Allocation Section of the Education Bureau (EDB) (Address: 2/F, Lui Kee Education Services Centre, 269 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai; Tel: 2832 7740 and 2832 7700) during office hours from early December 2010 to 24 January 2011.

DP application is not subject to restriction on districts. Each student may apply to not more than two participating secondary schools, otherwise his/her chance of acquiring a DP will be forfeited. Of the two Application Forms received by the student, one carries Order of School Preference 1 and the other carries Order of School Preference 2. Order of School Preference 1 stands for a student's first choice and Order of School Preference 2 stands for a student's second choice.

As regards the lists of participating secondary schools, parents may refer to the Handbook for Application for Secondary 1 Discretionary Places (Handbook) distributed to primary schools in early December 2010. Parents may also visit EDB's Homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) (Select: Home > Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education > Education System > School Places Allocation Systems > Secondary School Places Allocation System) to download the lists or call EDB's 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System on 2891 0088 (Press 2 (English) > 5 (Fax Services) > 04 (Secondary School Places Allocation System: School Lists)) to obtain the lists by fax.

(3) Q What should be taken into consideration when parents choose a school for their children?

A Parents should consider all aspects of the school, e.g. its educational philosophy, culture, class structure, development and operation, and their children's abilities, inclinations and interests so as to make a suitable school choice.

Schools may decide on their own admission procedures, admission criteria and weightings according to their educational philosophy and characteristics. The admission criteria and weightings adopted by the school must be fair, just, open and educationally sound, and must be made public prior to admission, e.g. by displaying in a prominent place of the school, uploading on the school's homepage, publishing in the Secondary School Profile or informing each applicant in writing. Schools may arrange interviews, but no written test should be conducted.

Parents may refer to the Secondary School Profiles distributed by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation in early December 2010, or visit the school's website so as to find out more information about the school.

(4) Q As schools are not allowed to conduct any written test for admission purpose, how can they assess the performance of the applicants?

A Applications will be evaluated based on the admission criteria and weightings set by the schools, e.g. the academic and non-academic performance of the students. Some of the schools will also make use of the interviews to understand the applicants' aptitude, interest and potential in order to select suitable students for admission.

(5) Q What do parents need to note when making a DP application for their children?

A Students who are successful in DP application will not be allocated a school place in central allocation (CA). Parents should, therefore, apply to school(s) of their preference. As the Application Form for S1 Discretionary Place once submitted cannot be cancelled or retrieved, and no change can be made to the order of school preference, parents should make very careful consideration before submitting an application so as to make a suitable choice.

(6) Q When making a DP application, what documents are required to be submitted to the school applied for?

A The documents to be submitted should include the Application Form for S1 Discretionary Place and the documents as required by the school concerned, e.g. students' school report cards, awards or prizes, and certificates or records for extra-curricular activities and community service. Primary schools' recommendation letters are not required to be submitted. Scores or positions of students in individual subjects are not required to be provided, either.

(7) Q What are the criteria for allocating a DP if a student has applied to two participating schools and is accepted by both of them?

A Each Application Form for S1 Discretionary Place carries a unique number for identifying the student's order of school preference. EDB will match the students' preferences against the schools' successful and reserve lists. If a student is successful in both of the schools to which he/she applies, allocation will be based on the student's order of preference. In other words, the student will be allocated to his/her first choice.

(8) Q What is the consequence of making DP applications to more than two participating schools?

A If a student applies to more than two participating secondary schools for DP, be they the government, aided, caput or participating DSS schools, his/her chance of acquiring a DP will be forfeited.

(9) Q Apart from applying to not more than two participating schools, can students apply to Jockey Club Ti-I College at the same time?

A Yes. The application period for S1 admission to Jockey Club Ti-I College is from 3 January to 29 January 2011. If students are successful in their application to Jockey Club Ti-I College, they will not be allocated a DP or a place in CA under the SSPA System. If they are unsuccessful in their application, they can still go through the SSPA System for allocation of an S1 place.

(10) Q Can students also apply to non-participating DSS schools at the same time?

A Yes. As there is no limit to the number of non-participating DSS schools that a student may apply to, he/she may be accepted by several non-participating DSS schools. However, provided the parent has surrendered the signed undertaking and the original of the Primary 6 Student Record Form to one of the schools making the offer, this will serve as a confirmation of the acceptance of the S1 place offered by the non-participating DSS school and the agreement to give up any other subsidised S1 places (including the S1 places of participating schools and Jockey Club Ti-I College). The school will notify EDB of the parent's decision by mid April 2011. On receiving the successful lists from non-participating DSS schools, EDB will not allocate the students on the list to other secondary schools through the SSPA System.

As regards the lists of non-participating DSS schools for this school year, parents may visit EDB's Homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) (Select: Home > Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education > Education System > School Places Allocation Systems > Secondary School Places Allocation System) to download the lists or call EDB's 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System on 2891 0088 (Press 2 (English) > 5 (Fax Services) > 04 (Secondary School Places Allocation System: School Lists)) to obtain the lists by fax in late October 2010.

(11) Q Is it necessary for all participating students to complete and return the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form to EDB in early May 2011?

A Whether or not students have applied for a DP of a participating school and/or Jockey Club Ti-I College, or S1 places of non-participating DSS schools, they must return the completed Secondary One Choice of Schools Form to EDB through the primary schools in early May 2011. This is to ensure that in case they have not been successful in their application to these schools, they will still be allocated an S1 place in CA.

For students admitted by non-participating DSS schools and accepted the offer with the signed undertakings and the originals of their P6 Student Record Forms surrendered to the schools, or for students admitted by other schools (e.g. international schools or private schools) and decided not to participate in CA, their parents are also required to sign on the Choice Form and indicate their intention of not participating in CA, and to return the Choice Form to EDB through the primary schools for processing.

(12) Q When will students know the application results for DP?

A The results of DP of all schools (including participating schools and Jockey Club Ti-I College) will be released together with the results of CA on 5 July 2011. Schools will not notify the applicants of the application results individually. Parents need not make enquiries to the schools they apply to before the announcement of the allocation results.

School Places Allocation Section
Education Bureau
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Central Allocation

(1) Q When will parents receive the choice-making documents for central allocation (CA)?

A Parents of participating Primary 6 (P6) students of the current cycle will receive the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form) and the related choice-making documents through their children's primary schools in mid April 2011. Parents must return the completed Choice Form to the Education Bureau (EDB) through their children's primary schools in early May 2011.

(2) Q What should parents take note of when filling in the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form?

A The Secondary One Choice of Schools Form is divided into Part A and Part B. For Part A Unrestricted School Choices, parents may choose a maximum of three secondary schools from any school nets, including schools in their children's own net. As for Part B Restricted School Choices, parents can choose a maximum of 30 secondary schools within their children's net. If the secondary schools they have indicated in Part A are also located in their children's school net, they may include these schools in Part B. However, parents should not repeat the same school choices within the same Part as this will not increase the chance of their children being allocated to these schools.

When parents complete Part A with the school choices, they should refer to the Handbook for Unrestricted School Choices (Handbook) distributed to primary schools in mid April 2011. Parents may also visit EDB's Homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) (Select: Home > Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education > Education System > School Places Allocation Systems > Secondary School Places Allocation System) to download the lists or call EDB's 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System on 2891 0088 (Press 2 (English) > 5 (Fax Services) > 04 (Secondary School Places Allocation System: School Lists)) to obtain the lists by fax. When parents complete Part B with the school choices, they should refer to the Secondary School Lists of the net their children belong to. Together with the Choice Forms, the Secondary School Lists are distributed to parents in mid April for reference.

(3) Q What are the criteria for CA?

A CA is based on a student's allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number.

(4) Q How are the allocation bands determined? What are they used for?

A Students get their allocation bands according to their scaled internal assessment (IA) results. Students' IA results at the end of Primary 5, and both in mid-year and at the end of P6 will be standardised, and scaled by the average of the sampled results of the Pre-Secondary 1 Hong Kong Attainment Test (Pre-S1 HKAT) 2008 and 2010 of the school. For the schools which do not have

the sampled results of the Pre-S1 HKAT 2008 or 2010 (e.g. the newly participating schools), the average of the sampled results of all schools in the same school net in the test in that particular year will be used for scaling.

For the allocation of school places in Part A the Unrestricted School Choices, the scaled marks of all students in the territory will be put into an order of merit. Then the students will be equally divided into three Territory Bands, each consisting of 1/3 of the total number of primary students in the territory. As regards allocation of school places in Part B Restricted School Choices, the scaled marks of all students within the same school net will be put into an order of merit. Then the students will be equally divided into three Net Bands, each consisting of 1/3 of the total number of primary students in the school net.

While Territory Band is used to determine the order of allocation of a student for unrestricted school places, Net Band is for allocation of restricted school places. Allocation band is not an absolute standard for assessing P6 students' academic performance.

(5) Q How are the secondary school nets demarcated?

A In line with district administration boundaries, the whole territory is divided into 18 secondary school nets for the allocation of school places as CA in Part B is done by school net. According to the existing policy, the secondary school net to which a student belongs is determined by the physical location of the primary school he/she attends.

(6) Q How are S1 places assigned in each school net?

A Based on the demand and supply of S1 places in each school net and following the principle of vicinity as laid down by the SSPA Committee (comprising representatives from primary and secondary schools of each school net and representatives from primary and secondary school councils), P6 students are allocated places in their own districts as far as possible to minimise unnecessary cross-district allocation and avoid long-distance travel.

Because of the imbalance between the demand and supply of places in some districts, school places would be netted from neighbouring districts with surplus places to districts where places for CA are insufficient to meet the demand. This is to ensure that there are sufficient places in each of the school nets to meet the demand for CA. To enable parents to have more choices, apart from the participating secondary schools physically located in the district, each school net also comprises a number of secondary schools in other districts, e.g. Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools and secondary schools linked to the feeder and nominated primary schools located in the district. As the supply and demand situation changes over years, the secondary schools in other districts and the number of school places they provide may vary from year to year.

(7) Q What is cross-net allocation?

A As the allocation of school places for Part B of CA is done by school net and the school net to which a student belongs is determined by the physical location of the primary school he/she attends. If a P6 student resides in a district which is different from where his/her primary school is located due to home moving or whatever reasons, his/her parent may submit application for cross-net allocation, viz to change the school net in which the student's primary school is

located to the school net which the student resides. If the parent wishes to apply for cross-net allocation, he/she has to provide the recognized proof of residential address to the student's primary school before early March for validation. The primary school would forward all verified copies of the application documents to EDB for further processing. If the student is approved for cross-net allocation, he/she will participate in Part B of CA in the new school net.

(8) Q If a student is approved for cross-net allocation, how is his/her Net Band determined in the new school net?

A For a student approved for cross-net allocation, the scaled marks he/she has obtained in the school in his/her original school net will be compared with the scaled marks of the students in the new school net to determine the Net Band he/she belongs to. In other words, the student's Net Band in the new school net may be different from that in his/her original school net.

For example, if a student belongs to Net Band 1 in his/her original school net, and is approved for cross-net allocation in a new school net where the overall performance of students is better, he/she may get a lower Net Band, say Net Band 2 in the new school net. If the student belongs to Net Band 2 in his/her original school net, and is approved for cross-net allocation in a new school net where the overall performance of students is inferior, he/she may get a higher Net Band, say Net Band 1 in the new school net.

(9) Q What is the allocation procedure for CA?

A The Unrestricted School Choices in Part A are processed first. Only after the school choices of all the students in Part A have been processed will the computer begin to process the Restricted School Choices in Part B.

When processing the Unrestricted School Choices in Part A, the computer will first allocate school places to students in Territory Band 1 according to their order of preference of school choices. After screening the school choices of all these students, the computer will follow the same procedure to process the school choices of students in Territory Band 2 and finally those of Territory Band 3 students. Students successful in obtaining a place in Part A will not be allocated a place in Part B. If a student is not allocated a school place in Part A after all his/her school choices have been exhausted, he/she will be allocated a place in Part B.

When processing the Restricted School Choices in Part B, the computer will first allocate school places to students in Net Band 1 according to their order of preference of school choices. If a student cannot be allocated a school place even after all his/her school choices have been exhausted, the computer will allocate a place to him/her from the remaining places in the school net. After all the students in Net Band 1 have been allocated school places, the computer will follow the same procedure to process the choices of students in Net Band 2 and finally those of Net Band 3 students.

(10) Q What is the random number used for?

A The random number is generated by the computer before running the allocation program. It is used to determine the order of allocation of students within the same allocation band. If the demand for school places of a certain secondary school exceeds the supply, the student possessing a smaller random number within the same allocation band will be allocated a place first. The random number has no connection with the Student Reference Number or the student's personal data.

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Others

Feeder and Nominated Schools

(1) Q What are the Secondary 1 (S1) admission arrangements for a Primary 6 (P6) student studying in a feeder/nominated school?

A After the deduction of repeater and discretionary places, a feeder secondary school may reserve a maximum of 85% of the remaining places for its feeder primary school(s), and a nominated secondary school 25% of the remaining places for its nominated primary school(s) at the central allocation (CA) stage. A P6 student of a feeder/nominated school is eligible for a reserved place if he/she is in Net Band 1 or 2 and has chosen the feeder/nominated secondary school as his/her first choice in Part B Restricted School Choices. If the school accepts Net Band 3 students, these students will also be eligible. Parents may make enquiries to the feeder/nominated secondary school direct.

If the number of eligible students exceeds the number of reserved places, the order of priority for allocation will be based on the student's Net Band and random number until all the reserved places are filled.

"Through-train" Schools

(2) Q What are the S1 admission arrangements for a P6 student studying in a "through-train" school?

A A P6 student of a "through-train" school may choose to proceed to its linked secondary school direct. If the student applies for S1 place(s) of non-participating Direct Subsidy Scheme schools or DP of participating schools, or participates in CA, he/she will not be allowed to retain the right to proceed direct to the linked secondary school.

Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools

(3) Q What should parents take note of if they wish to send their children to a Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) school?

A Parents should note that DSS schools may be fee charging. Students may be promoted to Secondary 4 (S4) in their own schools upon completion of Secondary 3 and will not be centrally placed to S4 in other schools subvented by the Education Bureau (EDB).

(4) Q For the participating DSS schools, what are the differences in the allocation arrangements as compared with government, aided and caput schools?

A For the participating DSS schools, their allocation arrangements are basically the same as the government, aided and caput schools except that participating DSS schools may reserve more than 30% of their S1 places as DP and the S1 places of participating DSS schools are allocated on a "no-choice no-allocation" principle, i.e. students will not be allocated to a participating DSS school unless they have

included the school as one of the CA choices.

(5) Q What is the admission procedure for the non-participating DSS schools?

A For the non-participating DSS schools, they can admit students according to their own procedures and schedules and will not be allocated students through the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System. There is no limit to the number of non-participating DSS schools that students may apply to, and admission is based on the criteria set by the schools. However, successful applicants have to decide whether or not to accept the S1 places offered by the non-participating DSS schools and to give up any other subsidised S1 places by mid April.

Non-Chinese Speaking Students

(6) Q What are the allocation arrangements for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students?

A Under the SSPA System, there is no difference between the allocation arrangements for NCS students and their local counterparts. At the DP stage, they can apply to any school they prefer. For choice-making at the CA stage, they can also indicate their preferences by choosing schools from any school nets in Part A and in their own school net in Part B.

(7) Q Which schools admit a greater number of NCS students?

A In the 2010/11 school year, nine secondary schools have been chosen by the Education Bureau as "designated schools". Intensive on-site support service is being provided to these schools to help them further enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students. Below is the list of the schools:

Region	District	School Name
Hong Kong Island	1. Eastern District	Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College
	2. Central and Western District	St Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong
Kowloon	3. Kwun Tong District	Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo)
	4. Sham Shui Po District	Delia Memorial School (Broadway)
	5. Yau Tsim Mong District	Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (West Kowloon)
New Territories	6. Tuen Mun District	Caritas Tuen Mun Marden Foundation Secondary School
	7. Yuen Long District	Pak Kau College
	8. Yuen Long District	Bethel High School
	9. Islands District	Buddhist Fat Ho Memorial College