

# **Professional Upgrading of Kindergarten Principals and Teachers**

## **Summary**

This outlines the implementation details of financial support for professional upgrading for ALL kindergarten principals and teachers from the 2007/08 school year to the 2011/12 school year.

## **Policy Targets**

2. At present, all pre-primary principals are required to possess a Certificate in Early Childhood Education (C(ECE)) qualification, and teachers a Qualified Kindergarten Teacher (QKT) status. To upgrade the professionalism of pre-primary education workers, the Government will provide financial support for principals and teachers for further professional upgrading.

- (a) From the 2009/10 school year onwards, all new KG principals must have a degree in early childhood education (BEd(ECE)) or equivalent, at least one-year relevant post-qualification experience and completed a certification course before, or exceptionally within the first year of, their appointment.
- (b) Serving principals are expected to complete the certification course by the end of the 2011/12 school year. Serving principals are also encouraged to obtain a BEd(ECE) though the requirement is not mandatory.
- (c) By the end of the 2011/12 school year, serving KG teachers are expected to have obtained the Certificate in Early Childhood Education (C(ECE)) qualification.

Details of the certification course will be available before the end of the 2006/07 school year.

## **Financial Support for Professional Upgrading and Development**

### *For PEVS- KGs*

3. The Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) provides fee subsidy for parents of children attending nursery, lower and upper classes in PEVS-KGs and in parallel, subsidises teachers' professional development from the 2007/08 school year. A four-year funding for teacher professional development will be embedded in the voucher up to the 2010/11 school year as follows-.

School Year	Subsidy for Staff Professional Development per pupil per annum (HK\$)
2007/08	3,000
2008/09	3,000
2009/10	2,000
2010/11	2,000

4. PEVS-KGs are expected to spend the designated part of the voucher on professional upgrading of teachers and principals in the following three areas in order of priority:

- (a) course fee reimbursement;
- (b) appointment of supply teachers to substitute for teachers on training course; and/or
- (c) provision of school-based professional development programmes.

5. The unspent balance as at end of the 2011/12 school year would be clawed back by EMB.

6. During the three-year transitional period from the 2007/08 to 2009/10 school years for PEVS-PI KGs to redeem the voucher, financial support for professional upgrading for principals and teachers of these KGs will be provided in the same way as stipulated in paragraph 7 below. The training provision as mentioned in paragraph 3 above will be calculated and take effect from the new school year after the KGs have attained the NPM status. Principals and teachers of the KGs concerned may receive no less than the same amount of course fee reimbursement as teachers and principals in non-PEVS KGs. This will ensure all serving teachers and principals have the same incentive and opportunity to attain the enhanced qualifications by the end of the 2011/12 school year.

*For non-PEVS KGs*

7. To encourage principals and teachers of PI or NPM KGs not under the PEVS to upgrade themselves, they are entitled to claim reimbursement from EMB for up to 50% of the fees for an approved C(ECE) or degree course in ECE and a certification course for principals, capped at \$60,000.

**Implementation arrangements**

*For PEVS- KGs*

8. KGs are required to submit a five-year Staff Development Plan (SDP) from

2007/08 to 2011/12 by October 2007 with reference to their staff profile and school plan. Subject to vetting, the provision for staff development will be disbursed to the KGs concerned to meet the estimated annual expenditure. KGs are required to update the SDP annually for submission to EMB to report progress and indicate the scheduled time for the professional upgrading of their teachers and principals together with the estimated cash flow requirements. EMB will review the disbursement arrangements in the light of actual requirements and operational needs.

9. A sample template for SDP will be provided in due course. KGs should work out their individual staff development plan with reference to their staff profile. The staff development policy and the criteria for allocation of financial support should be fair, open and transparent as the financial support for professional upgrading is principal and teachers' entitlement. KG principals should be responsible for answering any queries by their teachers. The following are some guiding principles-

- (a) Serving principal and serving full-time teachers teaching the full curriculum of nursery, lower and upper classes in the KGs as in the 2007/08 school year (and onwards) are eligible for course fee reimbursement for one approved C(ECE) or BEd(ECE) course/certificate course. The list of approved courses will be uploaded and updated from time to time.
- (b) The SDP is in line with the policy target set out in paragraph 2 of Appendix II of EMB Circular No.1/2007 dated 22 January 2007.
- (c) In general, teachers on the regular staff establishment to meet the 1:15 teacher to pupil ratio and KG principals should be given priority.
- (d) Eligible staff on completion of training and upon qualification upgrading will continue to serve in the respective KGs, say for one or two years.
- (e) The SDP will take into consideration the need for succession planning.
- (f) Supply teachers on monthly or daily basis are not eligible for course fee reimbursement.

10. Principals and teachers upon enrolment to the approved course should pay the course fee themselves. They may apply for reimbursement from the KGs only upon satisfactory completion of the term of studies which the paid course fee has fully covered. Those who fail to satisfactorily complete the full course they have enrolled and had been reimbursed with part of the full course fee will have to refund the

reimbursed amount to the KGs concerned.

### Supply Teachers

11. KGs can use the subsidy to appoint supply teachers to relieve the workload of those teachers attending the approved training courses. KGs may consider appointing supply teachers on a one-to-one basis or a yearly basis. KGs are not allowed to use the staff development subsidy to appoint teaching or supporting staff other than for the above purpose.

### School-based professional development programmes

12. KGs are advised to make reference to their school development plan, their priority areas and teachers' development needs in organizing the school-based professional training. KGs should work out the school-based staff development plan in consultation with teachers and through participatory decision-making process.

13. KGs may invite known suitable persons in their relevant field, preferably with experience in ECE, to conduct school-based training. Justifications for the decision and invitation should be properly documented and kept.

14. KGs may after consulting parents and teachers as necessary consider setting aside no more than 3 school days during the school year for staff development when pupils need not attend classes. Off-shore development programmes, if any, need to be strongly justified. Development programmes confined to school visits only will not be chargeable to the subsidy. The travelling and subsistence expenses of teachers cannot be charged to the training provision.

### Accounting Requirements

15. For accounting and auditing purposes, KGs are required to keep a separate account named "Staff Professional Development" to reflect all the income and expenditure chargeable to the subsidy. This account should be included in the audited account to be submitted to EMB annually. KGs are also requested to keep records of all the training programmes undertaken. These records should be available for inspection at any time.

### *For PEVS-PI and non-PEVS KGs*

16. Principals and teachers serving in PEVS-PI and non-PEVS KGs who wish to claim for course fee reimbursement should apply to EMB through the serving KG. A reminder will be posted on the web in June each year. The course fee will be

reimbursed yearly upon their production of documentary proof on satisfactory completion of the course for progression to the next stage of studies. The amount to be reimbursed will be 50% of the tuition fee paid for that year, capped at \$60,000. Teachers and principals would be required to sign an undertaking to return the reimbursed portion of course fee should they fail to complete the full course.