

Free Quality Kindergarten Education Policy

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- Kindergarten (KG) education lays vital foundation for children's lifelong learning and whole person development. Capitalising on the strengths of the existing KG education in terms of vibrancy and diversity, the Free Quality KG Education Policy will be implemented starting from the 2017/18 school year.
- The policy objectives are to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education for all eligible children, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs. About 70% to 80% of the subsidised half-day KG places will be free. For whole-day KG places, school fees will be at a low level. Government expenditure on pre-primary education will increase from \$4 billion per year to \$6.7 billion in the 2017/18 school year.

Government Provision

Non-profit making (NPM) KGs joining the Free Quality KG Education Scheme will be directly provided with:

- A basic unit subsidy on a per student basis which is in principle sufficient for the provision of quality half-day (HD) services;
- Additional subsidy for each whole-day (WD) place and long WD place at 30% and 60% of HD unit subsidy respectively;
- Additional grants for special circumstances, for example, rental subsidy, premises maintenance grant, grant for cook, grant for support to non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, etc. Refund of rates and government rent to NPM KGs will continue; and
- A start-up grant for preparatory work in the implementation of the Scheme.

Enhancing the quality

- Improving the teacher-pupil ratio from 1:15 (including the principal) to 1:11 (principal not included) so that teachers would have more capacity for lesson preparation, development of school-based curriculum, professional collaboration and development, communication with parent and catering for students with diverse needs;
- Encouraging KGs to provide a career ladder and competitive remuneration to attract and retain quality teachers;
- Promoting continuous professional development of KG principals and teachers, for example, enhance the existing teacher training programmes and develop a Continuous Professional Development policy;
- Strengthening support to students with diverse needs;
- Refining the Quality Assurance Framework;
- Enhancing the governance and transparency of KGs;
- Improving school premises and facilities, and formulating measures to increase the provision of KG premises in the long run;
- Revising the planning standards as necessary to offer more WD places progressively to 500 WD and 500 HD places for every 1 000 children aged between three and six;
- Enhancing parent education and encouraging KGs to set up Parent-Teacher Associations; and
- Conducting more researches on child development in Hong Kong.

Reviewing the curriculum guide

Reviewing the curriculum guide with key emphases below:

- Continuing the built-up strengths of past development and good practices of KGs;
- Sustaining the direction of nurturing children's whole-person development;
- Designing a school-based curriculum with reference to children's growth and development characteristics;
- Emphasising moral development of children;
- Adopting learning through play and free exploration in play as major learning activities to inculcate a love to learn among children;
- Enhancing catering for children's diversity and providing an ideal and inclusive learning environment; and
- Promoting the interface between KGs and primary schools by enlisting concrete recommendations for different stakeholders.

Catering for student diversity

- Students from needy families:** Continuing to provide fee remission and provide an additional grant for school-related expenses¹ for eligible KG students;
- NCS students:** All KGs admitting NCS students may apply for school-based professional support; teacher training will be strengthened; a grant will be provided for KGs admitting eight or more NCS students; and
- Students with special needs or at risk of developmental delay:** The Government has launched a two-year pilot scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services, which will be converted into a regular government subsidised programme after its conclusion, to provide rehabilitation services for children with special needs who are studying in KGs. The enhancement of the teacher-pupil ratio to 1:11 will create more space for teachers to cater for the diverse needs of students. The Education Bureau will also offer more structured in-service training programmes for teachers.

¹ The amount of grant will be pegged at the level of the grant for school-related expenses for pre-primary students under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance.

