

Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (2016/17 School Year)
Voucher Redemption
Questions and Answers

1. Voucher Redemption

1.1 Q: What is “voucher redemption”?

A: Under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme¹, eligible pupils are issued with a Certificate of Eligibility². Through attending local Nursery, Lower Kindergarten or Upper Kindergarten courses under the PEVS, pupils can redeem fee subsidy under the PEVS from the Education Bureau (EDB). EDB will calculate fee subsidy amounts based on the number of pupils holding valid CE in the kindergartens eligible for voucher redemption³. KGs collect from parents the school fee after voucher redemption as specified on the “Fees Certificate” and EDB redeems the fee subsidy to the KGs attended by the pupils. This mode of subsidy provision is known as “voucher redemption”.

1.2 Q: Can parents of pupils redeem the voucher direct from EDB?

A: Parents receive fee subsidy through the PEVS KGs which their children attend. They cannot redeem the voucher direct from EDB.

1.3 Q: Where can parents gain access to the list of KGs approved to join the PEVS so as to facilitate their selection of schools at an early stage?

A: The list of KGs approved to join the PEVS in the 2016/17 school year has been uploaded to EDB webpage “New Milestone of Kindergarten Education” http://www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary_e since April 2016 for reference.

1.4 Q: Can KGs withdrawing from the PEVS since the 2016/17 school year continue to redeem voucher for pupils?

A: KGs withdrawing from the PEVS since the 2016/17 school year can still redeem voucher for eligible pupils (existing holders of CE as of the 2015/16 school year who remain in the kindergarten in the 2016/17 school year) still studying in the eligible courses.

1.5 Q: When can KGs collect CE of new pupils upon offer of school places?

A: If a child holding a CE is offered a school place by a PEVS KG and the offer is accepted, parent should present the original copy of the CE of the child to the KG for retention. The KG will issue an acknowledgement (with reference to Form

¹ Hereinafter abbreviated as PEVS

² Hereinafter abbreviated as CE

³ Hereinafter abbreviated as KG

2A or Form 2B) to parent to confirm receipt of the CE.

1.6 Q: How should KGs collect school fees? How does fee collection from pupils who hold CE differ from that from pupils who do not hold CE?

A: The school fees approved for collection by KGs have been specified on the “Fees Certificate”. Pupils who do not hold CE are not eligible for fee subsidy, and thus KGs should charge them the school fees without voucher subsidy. As for pupils who hold CE, KGs should charge them the school fees with education voucher redeemed.

1.7 Q: If the annual school fee for the 2016/17 school year charged by a KG is less than the voucher value (i.e. \$23,230), will parents receive the difference between the school fee and the subsidy?

A: If the annual school fee charged by a KG (e.g. \$20,000) is less than the voucher value, parents do not have to pay school fee and will not receive the difference between the school fee and the subsidy.

1.8 Q: For parents receiving assistance under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) of the Social Welfare Department, if their children attend KGs in the 2016/17 school year, can they receive fee subsidy under the PEVS?

A: Parents in receipt of CSSA with children to attend KG classes in the 2016/17 school year, like other respective parents, are required to submit applications to the Student Finance Office (SFO), Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency in order to receive fee subsidy under the PEVS, if their children have not been issued with the CE.

1.9 Q: Are pupils of families on CSSA also eligible for education related subsidy on top of fee subsidy under the PEVS?

A: In case additional financial assistance on top of the subsidy from the voucher is required by families in receipt of CSSA, they should approach the Social Welfare Department direct for additional assistance under the CSSA Scheme. They are not required to apply for fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) from the SFO. For enquiries about applications for assistance under the CSSA Scheme for pre-primary education may be made to the Social Welfare Department (Hotline: 2343 2255).

1.10 Q: If children holding the CE repeat their study in the same level during the CE’s valid period, and require more than 3 years’ time to complete kindergarten education, will the validity period of the CE be extended?

A: The maximum validity period of the CE is three years. The CE is valid for use

within its validity period and will expire afterwards.

Application for extension of validity period of the CE will only be considered by the Government under very special circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, for example, the child has been identified with special educational needs. In such application, the applicant must provide strong and solid proofs, for example, an assessment report issued by registered medical practitioner or professional, to substantiate the request.

For enquiries about applications for extension of CE validity period, please contact the SFO (Hotline: 2802 2345).

2. Calculation Method and Arrangement of Subsidy Disbursement

2.1 Q: How does EDB calculate the amount of the fee subsidy?

A: In the 2016/17 school year, the voucher value is **\$23,230** per pupil per annum. If the inclusive fee of an eligible KG course is lower than the voucher value, the amount of subsidy per instalment is calculated upon the actual school fee.

Since the 2012/13 school year, PEVS fee subsidy is disbursed according to the start month and number of instalments of eligible KG courses approved on the “Fees Certificate” (i.e. from August or September by 10/11/12 instalments).

Amount of fee subsidy per instalment for eligible KG courses in the 2016/17 school year are as below:

School fee collected by 10 instalments	School fee collected by 11 instalments	School fee collected by 12 instalments
\$2,323	1st instalment \$2,120 Remaining 10 instalments \$2,111	1st instalment 1,945 Remaining 11 instalments \$1,935

However, if the inclusive fee of an eligible KG course is lower than the voucher value under the PEVS, the amount of subsidy per instalment is calculated upon the actual school fee.

2.2 Q: How to calculate the fee subsidy for KGs which have courses commencing in August and September respectively?

A: If a KG has courses commencing in August and September respectively, the amount of voucher is calculated as follows:

- The amount of voucher redeemed in August:

Number of pupils in August studying in courses that commence in August x
Subsidy amount for August

- The amount of voucher redeemed in September:

Number of pupils in September studying in courses that commence in August x
Subsidy amount of the course for September + Number of pupils in September
studying in courses that commence in September x Subsidy amount of the
course for September

2.3 Q: What are the arrangements for disbursement of PEVS fee subsidy?

A: Provisional fee subsidy is disbursed early each month according to the approved start month and number of instalments of eligible KG courses approved on the "Fees Certificate". The first instalment of provisional fee subsidy is disbursed at the beginning of August or September, depending on the start month of KG courses. In the first few months of a school year, fee subsidy will be disbursed according to the projected enrolment reported by KGs in late June through Form 1, while starting from November, fee subsidy will be disbursed in accordance with the pupil information as reported by KGs in the previous month.

EDB will, in 3 phases, calculate the fee subsidy based on the updated pupil attendance information due to changes such as pupils' transfer in or out of school and pupils' non-attendance for an entire month reported by KGs. The adjustment of fee subsidy will be conducted in November 2016, March and August 2017. Underpayment of fee subsidy will be settled in December 2016, April and September 2017, whereas overpayment of fee subsidy will be deducted from the upcoming provisional subsidy.

2.4 Q: Can disbursement of PEVS fee subsidy for the 2016/17 school year be advanced to August 2016 for KGs with courses commencing in September 2016?

A: With effect from the 2012/13 school year, fee subsidy is disbursed to KGs according to their approved tuition fee payment schedules to streamline administrative and accounting procedures. As such, for KGs with courses commencing in September, fee subsidy will be disbursed from September 2016 according to their approved tuition fee payment schedules. This Bureau will not advance the disbursement of fee subsidy and the KGs concerned have to pay attention to their financial arrangement in August.

3. New Intakes, Dropouts and Absentees

3.1 Q: Is voucher redemption still possible if a pupil holding a CE is transferred from one KG to another during the school year?

A: If parents wish to continue to receive fee subsidy after their child is transferred to

another KG during the school year, they must select a KG approved to join the PEVS for their child.

3.2 Q: If a pupil holding a valid CE is transferred during the school year to another KG which has withdrawn from the PEVS with effect from the 2016/17 school year, will the pupil still be eligible for fee subsidy?

A: Pupils holding a valid CE for PEVS will receive school fee subsidy only if they are enrolled in KGs approved to join the PEVS.

Pupils transferred to a KG not joining the PEVS in the 2016/17 school year can neither receive fee subsidy under the PEVS nor apply for the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) in the new KG.

3.3 Q: For dropout or transfer cases which take place during the school year, how should the voucher be redeemed by KGs and how is it calculated?

A: Each CE holder's voucher for a month can only be redeemed by one KG. For instance, if a pupil is transferred to another KG in mid-November 2016, in general, the former KG attended by the pupil can redeem the voucher for November 2016 while the KG newly attended by the pupil can only redeem the voucher for the pupil from December 2016 onwards.

If a pupil is admitted in the middle of the month, the KG should note that the voucher of the pupil for that month may have been redeemed by another KG.

3.4 Q: If a pupil is admitted by a KG in a particular month, but the date of admission is not the first school day of the month, can the KG redeem the voucher of the pupil for that month?

A: The KG can redeem the voucher for the month even though the date of admission is not the first school day of the month, provided that the pupil's voucher for that particular month has not been redeemed by another KG. For instance, if a child holding CE enrolls in a KG for the first time in mid-November 2016, the KG can redeem the child's voucher from November 2016.

3.5 Q: A KG admits a child holding CE in the middle of the month. If the KG cannot redeem the voucher for that month because the voucher has already been redeemed, should the KG charge the parent monthly fee without voucher subsidy, or the monthly "Fees with Education Voucher Redeemed" as specified on the "Fees Certificate"?

A: Each CE holder's voucher for a month can only be redeemed by one KG. If a pupil is transferred to another KG in the middle of a month, in general, the former

KG attended by the pupil can still redeem the voucher for the month while the new KG attended by the pupil can only collect from parent the school fee with education voucher redeemed in that month and start to redeem the voucher from the next month. However, if a pupil attends more than one KG in a day or attends more than one KG alternatively in a month, the KG not entitled to redeem voucher can, upon such circumstance, charge the respective pupil the tuition fee without voucher subsidy for the month.

3.6 Q: Any points to note for KGs admitting children at the end of a school year? What fee should KGs charge?

A: When KGs admit children at the end of a school year, KGs should check whether the children have completed KG courses of the school year in another KG (i.e. attend classes up to the last month of the school year in respect of the previous KG) by asking their parents or checking with the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB. If a child has completed a KG course in a school year, the pupil will not be entitled to receive voucher subsidy for attendance in the second KG. If KGs admit such children, KGs cannot redeem voucher for them in the current school year and, upon such circumstance, can charge respective pupils the tuition fees without voucher subsidy for the remaining months of the school year.

3.7 Q: If children are not CE holders when seeking enrolment but with their application for CE being processed by the SFO, which month does EDB take in calculating their fee subsidy? How should KGs collect school fees from their parents?

A: Provided that they could get CE, the valid period as specified in CE will be taken in calculating the respective subsidy.

Children not holding CE are to pay school fees without voucher subsidy as specified on the “Fees Certificate”.

After the children have got the CE and presented the original copy of the CE to KG for retention, the respective KG should then immediately report to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB to facilitate voucher redemption. EDB will calculate fee subsidy in accordance with the effective month of the CE. Besides, once a pupil presents a CE, if the KG has ever charged the above pupil the tuition fee without voucher subsidy during the valid period of his/her CE, the KG should return over-charged tuition fee to the pupil as soon as possible.

Please note that:

- Upon pupils’ getting or presenting of CE, KG should report to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB immediately. The Voucher Redemption Team

will update records of the pupils concerned and pay the shortage of subsidy in the next adjustment process. KGs must report these late CE cases within the school year. **EDB will not accept application for redemption for any period in the previous school years.**

- Pupils cannot get voucher subsidy if they do not have CE. They have to pay the school fees without voucher subsidy as specified on the “Fees Certificate”.

3.8 Q: If a child hands in his/her CE at a certain time after admission, what are the points to note?

A: In principle, KG should charge a pupil “Fee with Education Voucher Redeemed” upon presentation of his/her CE. Notwithstanding that, the KG should return the previously over-charged school fee (if applicable) to the pupil as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary disputes. For example, a KG has charged the fee without voucher subsidy for a pupil enrolled in April 2017. Upon the presentation in May 2017 of the child’s CE which is effective from April 2017, the KG should return the over-charged school fee since April 2017 to the pupil as soon as possible.

Upon pupils’ getting or presenting of CE, KG should report to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB immediately. The Voucher Redemption Team will update records of the pupils concerned and the underpayment of fee subsidy will be settled in the next adjustment process. KGs must report these late CE cases within the school year. **EDB will not accept application for redemption for any period in the previous school years.**

3.9 Q: How do KGs know the effective month of a CE ?

A: The validity period is printed on the CE issued by the SFO. For example:

- **“This Certificate is valid for the period from the start of the 2016/17 school year up to the end of the 2018/19 school year”**

The CE is valid for voucher redemption for 3 school years from 2016/17 to 2018/19.

- **“This Certificate is valid from the month of December in 2016 up to the end of the 2018/19 school year”**

The CE is valid for voucher redemption from December 2016 to the end of 2016/17, and 2 school years from 2017/18 to 2018/19.

- **“This Certificate is valid from the start of the 2016/17 school year up to the month of October in 2017”**

The CE is valid for voucher redemption in the 2016/17 school year to October 2017.

KGs should check the validity period of CE upon receipt. Pupils will not be eligible for voucher redemption outside the validity period specified on their respective CE. From the 2010/11 school year, EDB will no longer remind KGs in writing of any CE that are going to expire.

3.10 Q: If pupils are granted conditional stay in Hong Kong by the Immigration Department, can they keep on using CE after expiry of the period of stay? Can the CE remain effective until the end of the school year?

A: For pupils granted conditional stay in Hong Kong, the validity period for receiving the fee subsidy should last until the end of their permitted stay. The expiry date of a CE is clearly shown on the CE. If permission has subsequently been granted by the Immigration Department to extend the stay of the pupils in Hong Kong, their parents are required to inform the SFO in writing for re-assessment of the eligibility of the pupils for the PEVS. Parents are advised to send in copies of the pupils' documentary evidence as well as those of theirs and their spouse's showing the immigration endorsement for the extension of stay in Hong Kong to SFO together with the notification letter. Where qualified, the pupils will be issued with another CE showing the new validity period. To avoid disruption in the receipt of subsidy under the PEVS, parents are required to send their request to SFO preferably one month or earlier before the expiry of the original visa of the pupils. (SFO enquiry hotline: 2802 2345).

The identity documents held by these pupils such as passports and visas are different from those held by local pupils. KGs should pay special attention to this and can remind parents concerned at least one month or earlier before the granted period of stay expires. The CE is invalid upon expiry of the period of stay and KGs will no longer be able to redeem the fee subsidy of the pupils.

3.11 Q: Some KGs may require parents to give sufficient notice before their children's withdrawal, or else they will retain the pupils' CE. Can a KG hold back pupils' CE?

A: KGs should duly inform parents of dropout procedures upon admission of new pupils to avoid unnecessary disputes. CE is the property of pupils. When a pupil leaves the KG after completion of the KG course or drops out, the original copy of his/her CE is returned to his/her parent.

3.12 Q: How should KGs handle CE of graduating pupils? If parents do not get back the CE after their children's graduation or withdrawal, how should KGs handle the unclaimed CE?

A: CEs are returned by KGs to parents upon pupils' completion of KG courses. There is no need for KGs to report to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB in this regard.

When children are enrolled, KGs are advised to inform their parents in writing how they will handle unclaimed CE. For example, a KG specifies that unclaimed CE for 8 months upon graduation/ withdrawal will be considered as abandoned, and will be destroyed.

3.13 Q: If pupils receiving school fee subsidy under the PEVS are absent from school for a long time, can they still be eligible for fee subsidy during the period of absence? If there are such cases of absence, do KGs have to report to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB?

A: To be entitled to receive fee subsidy for a month, eligible student studying in a PEVS KG must have attended KG class in that month. Generally speaking, under the PEVS, if pupils are absent from school for a whole month, i.e. the period of absence covers the first day through the last day of a calendar month, they will not be entitled to receive the fee subsidy for that calendar month. Notwithstanding that, special cases (e.g. illness) with documentary proof are at EDB's discretion with consideration given on an individual case-by-case basis. If applicable, the certified true copy of documentary proof (e.g. certificate of sick leave/admission to hospital) should be submitted to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB by KGs together with duly completed Form 4. The Voucher Redemption Team will determine on a case-by-case basis whether to suspend the disbursement of the fee subsidy concerned.

3.14 Q: Why do KGs have to report cases of non-attendance for a whole month?

A: Under the PEVS, parents receive fee subsidy while KGs redeem vouchers for pupils holding valid CE. As PEVS fee subsidy is government-funded, KGs are required to report cases of non-attendance for a whole month so that the Voucher Redemption Team can determine on a case-by-case basis whether to suspend the disbursement of the fee subsidy concerned.

3.15 Q: If parents of pupils who are absent for a whole month wish to apply for the fee subsidy for that month, can they submit the documentary proof to EDB directly?

A: Under the PEVS, KGs are required to report to the Voucher Redemption Team on cases of pupil non-attendance for a whole month. When parents apply for the fee subsidy for the absent month, KGs have to verify the documentary proof provided by parents before submission to the Voucher Redemption Team. Generally speaking, pupils who are absent from school for a whole month will not

be entitled to receive the fee subsidy for that month. Notwithstanding that, special cases (e.g. illness) with documentary proof are at EDB's discretion with consideration given on an individual case-by-case basis.

3.16 Q: As pupils who are absent for a whole month are not entitled to receive fee subsidy, can KGs charge these pupils fee without voucher subsidy for that month?

A: School fee is calculated on annual basis, and collected by monthly instalments. The school fee collected by a KG from a pupil should be equal to the sum of "Fee with Education Voucher Redeemed" and the amount of fee subsidy under PEVS. Notwithstanding that, if a pupil is not eligible for fee subsidy for a certain month due to non-attendance for a whole month, the school fee for that month will be the school fee without voucher subsidy. KGs are advised to inform parents of the arrangements of pupils' non-attendance for a whole month upon admission of their children.

4. Reporting Pupil Information

4.1 Q: What is the purpose of reporting pupil attendance information?

A: Premised upon the pupil attendance information, the number of pupils eligible for voucher redemption in each month can be worked out for calculation of the fee subsidy concerned, and hence any overpayment or underpayment of the subsidy can be adjusted.

4.2 Q: Is there any mechanism in place to monitor KGs' report of pupil information?

A: Surprise headcount inspections are conducted to selected KGs to check if pupils receiving fee subsidy are attending the KGs, original copies of pupils' CE are kept properly in KGs, and the pupil information reported by KGs is accurate. In addition, relevant government sections will inspect KGs from time to time to check the pupil information.

KGs should report pupil changes timely (especially cases of non-attendance for a whole month), and keep pupil attendance records in a systematic way, such as having separate attendance registers of half-day and whole-day classes of the same level.

4.3 Q: How should KGs submit information of pupils holding CE to EDB?

A: KGs should

- Before 14 September 2016, update the information of their pupils who are studying in KG courses of the KG in August (if commence in August) and September in the 2016/17 school year via the function "Pupil Information" of the "KEVRS". The updating include

- i. confirming the information of pupils promoted to Lower Kindergarten and Upper Kindergarten in the KGs, removing the records of pupils who had left as at the end of the 2015/16 school year;
 - ii. adding information of Nursery new intakes and other transferees (only applicable to KGs joining the PEVS); and
 - iii. reporting the last date of attendance of the pupils who dropped out after the start of the 2016/17 school year.
- On or after 14 September 2016, report new intakes (only applicable to KGs joining the PEVS), course changes or dropouts within 7 days of occurrence either via the function “Reporting Changes on Pupil Information” of the “KEVRS” or by fax with standard form.
 - On or after 14 September 2016, report cases of non-attendance for entire month within 7 days of occurrence by fax with standard form.

Standard forms for reporting pupil changes are available at EDB webpage “New Milestone of Kindergarten Education” at www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary_e. For the sake of reducing clerical work and making early report of pupil information, submission via the “KEVRS” is highly preferred.

4.4 Q: How do KGs report the information of pupils without CE to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB?

A: KGs are not required to report information of pupils not holding a CE to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB.

4.5 Q: Will EDB stop accepting reporting of pupil information changes by fax?

A: To cater for the needs of individual KGs, the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB still accepts KGs’ reporting of pupil changes by fax for the time being. However, for the sake of reducing clerical work and making early report of pupil information, submission via the “KEVRS” is highly preferred.

4.6 Q: How do KGs handle pupils’ alteration of name?

A: Parents may choose not to alter the pupil’s name on CE provided that parents can produce a Hong Kong Birth Certificate/ a valid legal document with the addition/alteration of name, to support that both the new and the old names refer to the same pupil. In such cases, KG can still redeem the voucher in respect of the pupil even though the CE bears pupil’s old name. KG should put the photocopies of such documents together with the pupil’s CE for checking by EDB. Since parents do not alter the name on CE, KG should refer the pupil’s old name on CE whenever reporting pupil information to the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB.

Parents may also apply to the SFO for alteration of name on CE. A fee is charged for the application. Upon receipt of new CE with the new name, pupil should hand in the new CE to KG for retention. KG should then inform the Voucher Redemption Team of EDB via the function “New Intake” in “Reporting Changes on Pupil Information” of the “KEVRS” or by faxing duly completed Form 6 for updating record. From then onwards, pupil’s new name should be used in reporting pupil information to EDB.

Voucher Redemption Team, EDB
August 2016