

**Application for the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS)  
in the 2016/17 School Year**

[Frequently Asked Questions and Answers]

**I. Details of application**

1. Q: Where can parents obtain the information on eligibility for PEVS in the 2016/17 school year and the relevant application forms?  
A: Information leaflets, application forms and guidance notes for PEVS in the 2016/17 school year are available at District Offices, Post Offices, Regional Education Offices of the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (hereafter known as “SFO”). Application forms and related documents may also be downloaded from the homepage of EDB at [http://www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary\\_e](http://www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary_e) or the homepage of the SFO at <http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo>.
  
2. Q: Who will be eligible to join PEVS in the 2016/17 school year?  
A: Eligible students must be Hong Kong residents with right of abode, right to land or valid permission to remain without any conditions of stay (other than limit of stay) in Hong Kong, and born on or before 31 December 2013.
  
3. Q: What kinds of supporting documents are required when applying for PEVS for the 2016/17 school year?  
A: Applicant should provide copies of valid identity documents of himself/herself, his/her spouse, where applicable, and the child/children applying for PEVS. Such documents include, but are not limited to, copies of Hong Kong Identity Cards and Hong Kong Birth Certificates. Details can be found in paragraphs 1.3, 2.2 and 3.2 of Part B of the Guidance Notes on 2016/17 PEVS.
  
4. Q: Can children who are born in Hong Kong with parents both holding valid identity documents issued by the Mainland authority apply for PEVS?  
A: If the children are born in Hong Kong and issued with valid Hong Kong Birth Certificates, they are eligible to apply for PEVS even though their parents are not Hong Kong residents, provided they can meet the age requirement for application for PEVS. However, children holding two-way exit permits only are not eligible to apply for PEVS.
  
5. Q: Can children who are born in Hong Kong with father and/or mother holding student visa or visitor visa apply for PEVS?  
A: Children applying for PEVS must be Hong Kong residents with right of abode, right to land or valid permission to remain without any conditions of stay (other than limit of stay) in Hong Kong. Those who are born in Hong Kong, in possession of the Hong Kong Birth Certificate with the word ‘Established’ shown in the ‘Status of Permanent Resident’ column or bear the identity of Hong Kong Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for PEVS, regardless of

whether their parents are permanent residents of Hong Kong or not (e.g. residents of the Mainland). In other words, children with established Hong Kong permanent residency status are all eligible to apply for PEVS.

Children holding the Hong Kong Birth Certificates which bear the words 'Not Established' in the 'Status of Permanent Resident' column are usually those who are permitted to stay in Hong Kong for a limited period of time. Their permitted period of stay normally coincides with the permitted period of stay of their parents. In such circumstances, the parents of the children must be holding valid travel documents with the visa issued by the Immigration Department of the HKSAR Government **not** falling into the category of student visa or visitor visa for the children to be eligible to apply for PEVS. Enquiries about individual applications may be directed to the SFO's 24-hour hotline at 2802 2345 (the customer service officer of the 1823 will attend to the calls on a non-stop basis).

6. Q: When should parents return the application forms?

A: Application for PEVS for the 2016/17 school year is open starting from 1 September 2015. As the EDB will implement the "2016/17 K1 Admission Arrangements", to tie in with the arrangement, the "Certificate of Eligibility for the PEVS" for the 2016/17 ("2016/17 Voucher") will be used for registration for K1 places in the school year. As such, parents are required to apply to the SFO for "Assessment of Eligibility for PEVS 2016/17" from September to November 2015. Upon receipt of the application with all necessary information and documents provided, the SFO will generally take six to eight weeks to complete processing of the applications and issue the "2016/17 Voucher" to eligible applicants by post.

7. Q: How do parents know whether their applications have been received by the SFO?

A: The SFO will issue acknowledgement to applicants by either one of the following methods within 10 working days after receipt of the application-

- (1) if the applicant has filled out the mobile phone number in the application form, the SFO will send an "Acknowledgement of Application" SMS to the applicants.
- (2) if mobile phone number is not provided, the SFO will issue acknowledgement by post to the applicant.

If applicants do not receive any acknowledgment from the SFO three weeks after submitting their application forms, please call the SFO's 24-hour hotline at 2802 2345 (the customer service officer of the 1823 will attend to the calls on a non-stop basis) to check whether the application has been received to avoid delay in application processing due to wrong/unsuccessful delivery.

8. Q: When will parents receive the Certificate of Eligibility?

A: Upon receipt of the application with all necessary information and documents provided, the SFO will generally take six to eight weeks to complete processing of the applications and issue the "2016/17 Voucher" to eligible applicants by post. Applicants who are required to provide

supplementary information will be notified later pending their provision of supplementary information.

The Certificate of Eligibility will be mailed to the correspondence address of the applicant. The applicant must therefore ensure that the correspondence address is accurately provided in the application form. In case the applicant changes the correspondence / residential address in the course of application for PEVS, such change must be made known to the SFO in the first instance. Otherwise, the Certificate of Eligibility may not be mailed to the applicant, and the applicant would have to bear any possible consequence, including their inability to redeem fee subsidy under PEVS.

Enquiries about individual applications may be directed to the SFO's 24-hour hotline at 2802 2345 (the customer service officer of the 1823 will attend to the calls on a non-stop basis).

9. Q: Are children currently in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) eligible for PEVS?
- A: All parents in receipt of CSSA with children at the age appropriate for pre-primary education in the 2016/17 school year, like other parents with pre-primary children, are required to submit applications to the SFO for PEVS, in order to receive fee subsidy through PEVS, if they have not been issued with the Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS. If additional financial assistance on top of the fee subsidy from PEVS is required, they should approach SWD direct for additional assistance under the CSSA Scheme. Enquiries about applications on PEVS may be directed to the SFO's 24-hour hotline at 2802 2345 (the customer service officer of the 1823 will attend to the calls on a non-stop basis). Enquiries about applications for assistance under the CSSA Scheme for kindergarten education may be made to SWD's hotline at 2343 2255.
10. Q: If children previously in receipt of CSSA cease to be eligible for the scheme in the middle of a school year, could they apply for PEVS?
- A: CSSA families with children currently attending kindergarten classes should already have been issued with the Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS in the school year and are benefitting from fee subsidy under PEVS. If the family ceases to be eligible for the CSSA in the middle of the school year, parents of the children can apply for additional assistance under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) in case the fee subsidy under PEVS is inadequate to cover the entire amount of school fee and the family is financially in need. Details of application for KCFRS in the 2016/17 school year will be announced by the SFO in around July 2016. For enquiries, please visit the SFO's homepage at <http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo> or call the SFO's 24-hour hotline at 2802 2345 (the customer service officer of the 1823 will attend to the calls on a non-stop basis).

## II. Children Already Holding Certificates of Eligibility

11. Q: If parents have already been issued with a Certificate of Eligibility with a validity period beyond the 2015/16 school year, do they have to apply again to the SFO for PEVS in the 2016/17 school year?
- A: No. The 2016/17 application for PEVS is applicable to children who do not possess the Certificate of Eligibility valid for the 2016/17 school year and who will start or continue to attend kindergarten in the 2016/17 school year. If parents have already been issued with a Certificate of Eligibility valid for 2016/17, they **do not** have to make an application again.
12. Q: If a student holding a valid Certificate of Eligibility is transferred from one kindergarten to another during the 2016/17 school year, will the student still be eligible for school fee subsidy? Is it necessary to make a fresh application for PEVS?
- A: If a student holding a valid Certificate of Eligibility is transferred during the 2016/17 school year from one kindergarten to another kindergarten joining PEVS in the year, the student can still receive fee subsidy in the new school. His/her parents should produce the original of the Certificate of Eligibility returned by the previous school to the new school. Fresh application for PEVS is **not** required.
13. Q: If a student holding a valid Certificate of Eligibility is transferred during the 2016/17 school year to another kindergarten which was previously eligible for voucher redemption but has chosen to withdraw from PEVS with effect from 2016/17, will the student still be eligible for fee subsidy under PEVS?
- A: No. All newly enrolled students or students changing kindergartens in the 2016/17 school year can receive fee subsidy only when they are attending **local non-profit-making kindergartens under PEVS in the year**. Students newly enrolled in a kindergarten not joining PEVS in the 2016/17 school year can neither receive fee subsidy under PEVS nor apply for KCFRS in the new school year.
14. Q: Will the students in receipt of fee subsidy in the 2015/16 school year under PEVS in a kindergarten that will withdraw from PEVS in the new school year, continue to receive fee subsidy under PEVS in the 2016/17 school year in that kindergarten?
- A: Yes. Though the kindergarten will withdraw from PEVS in the 2016/17 school year, existing students already in receipt of fee subsidy under PEVS who remain in the eligible classes in that kindergarten will not be affected (i.e. they can still enjoy voucher redemption until they leave the kindergarten).

## III. Children Applying for the Certificate of Eligibility for the First Time

15. Q: If a child is applying for the Certificate of Eligibility for the first time and he/she will start to attend a private independent kindergarten in the 2016/17 school year, is the child eligible to apply for PEVS and will he/she be able to receive fee subsidy under PEVS?

A: As long as the child can meet the eligibility criteria to apply for PEVS, he/she will be issued with a Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS. However, for the 2016/17 school year, the “2016/17 Voucher” will also be used for K1 registration. For this purpose, parents who wish to receive subsidy under PEVS in a PEVS kindergarten should first use the “2016/17 Voucher” for K1 registration in the kindergarten joining PEVS before the start of the 2016/17 school year. After the school year starts, the voucher as retained by the kindergarten will be used for voucher redemption. As for students who change kindergarten in the 2016/17 school year, he/she must also be attending a kindergarten under PEVS to be eligible for voucher redemption.

The child cannot enjoy fee subsidy under PEVS when attending a private independent kindergarten even if the kindergarten has joined the “2016/17 K1 Admission Arrangements” and has collected the “2016/17 Voucher” from the parents for K1 registration. In addition, if the child newly enrolls in a kindergarten not joining PEVS in the 2016/17 school year, he/she can neither apply for KCFRS in the new school.

16. Q: If a child is applying for the Certificate of Eligibility for the first time and he/she will start to attend nursery class (i.e. K1) in kindergarten in the 2016/17 school year, what will be the validity period of his/her Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS?

A: As long as the child can meet all eligibility criteria to apply for PEVS, and he/she will start to attend nursery class (i.e. K1) in the 2016/17 school year, he/she will normally be issued with a Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS with validity period of three years from the 2016/17 school year to the 2018/19 school year.

17. Q: If the parent intends to arrange his/her child to attend a kindergarten eligible for voucher redemption in early 2016, should he/she apply for PEVS for the 2015/16 or 2016/17 school year?

A: PEVS for the 2016/17 school year will only provide fee subsidy to eligible children with effect from the 2016/17 school year. Children who are admitted to kindergarten in the 2015/16 school year (e.g. in early 2016) and wish to benefit from PEVS immediately should apply for PEVS for the 2015/16 school year. Please note that student-applicant must be born on or before 31 December 2012. Parents can obtain the application form for PEVS for 2015/16 from the SFO, but they must specify the school year they are applying for.

The validity period of the Certificate of Eligibility issued after the start of, but within, the 2015/16 school year will span maximally a period from a specified start-off month in the 2015/16 school year through to the end of the 2017/18 school year. The validity period will not be extended although the Certificate of Eligibility is issued in the middle of the school year.

#### **IV. PEVS Subsidy**

18. Q: How much will parents need to pay in the 2016/17 school year?
- A: Under PEVS, the school fee to be paid by parents should be the difference between the school fee approved to be charged by the kindergarten and the fee subsidy under PEVS in that school year. If the school fee charged by the kindergarten is higher than the subsidy under PEVS, parents have to pay the difference. If the school fee charged by the kindergarten is lower than the subsidy under PEVS, parents are not required to pay any school fee and will not be reimbursed the difference either. All along, individual kindergartens may adjust the school fee according to their annual income and expenditure estimates. Therefore, the difference to be paid by parents to the kindergarten in the 2016/17 school year depends on the then approved fee announced by the kindergarten.

#### **V. Kindergartens**

19. Q: Will the Government undertake any monitoring procedures to avoid kindergartens from increasing school fees excessively, which may eventually render parents unable to benefit from PEVS?
- A: Fee revision should be approved by EDB. School fees collected by kindergartens should include all items necessary for receiving education at school. Kindergartens should also inform parents in advance of all optional charge items for their reference. Moreover, EDB will require kindergartens under PEVS to disclose their school fees and operation details in the Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres for market monitoring.
20. Q: Will there be a list of eligible PEVS kindergartens for parents' reference?
- A: The list of approved KGs joining PEVS in the 2016/17 school year will be uploaded to the EDB website “New Milestone of Kindergarten Education” by batches. The first batch will be uploaded before February 2016 for public access at [http://www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary\\_e](http://www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary_e).
21. Q: I learned that EDB will continue to implement the admission arrangements for K1 in kindergartens for the 2016/17 school year (hereafter referred as “2016/17 K1 Admission Arrangements”). How can I obtain the details?
- A: For the details, frequently asked questions and other related information of the “2016/17 K1 Admission Arrangements”, parents may visit the EDB website ([http://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission\\_e](http://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission_e)) or call the EDB hotline at 2891 0088. Enquiries can also be made to the School Development Officers/ Pre-primary Services Officers (the telephone numbers can be found in the following website: [http://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission\\_e](http://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission_e))

## VI. Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS)

22. Q: Parents who are financially in need may apply for additional financial assistance under KCFRS when their children are enrolled in a kindergarten under PEVS. Please advise how the additional assistance under KCFRS should be derived.

A: Upon implementation of PEVS, low-income families with children attending nursery (K1), lower (K2) or upper (K3) classes in kindergarten will receive assistance that consists of two parts, one part being the non-means-tested fee subsidy from PEVS and the other part being the means-tested fee remission from KCFRS. If fee subsidy from PEVS is inadequate to cover entirely the actual tuition fees charged by the kindergarten, parents may apply for additional assistance from KCFRS. Those passing the means test will be provided with fee remission with reference to the level of assistance they are assessed to be eligible for. The following formula will be used to calculate the amount of fee remission:

$$\text{Half-day class monthly fee remission} = \frac{[\text{Annual tuition fee or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} - \text{voucher value dedicated towards fee subsidy}] \times \text{level of assistance}}{\text{No. of operating months of the kindergarten}}$$

$$\text{Whole-day class monthly fee remission} = \frac{[\text{Annual tuition fee or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} - \text{voucher value dedicated towards fee subsidy}] \times \text{level of assistance}}{\text{No. of operating months of the kindergarten}} + \frac{[\text{Actual monthly meal charge or maximum meal allowance (whichever is the less)}] \times \text{level of assistance}}{\text{level of assistance}}$$

Fee subsidy from PEVS is \$22,510 per student per annum for the 2015/16 school year. The fee remission ceilings for KCFRS for children attending nursery, lower or upper classes in the 2014/15 school year are:

Half-day class: \$26,500 per student per annum

Whole-day class: \$40,500 per student per annum

Maximum meal allowance: \$480 per student per month

The KCFRS remission ceilings for 2016/17 will be announced around September 2016 at the SFO's homepage <http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo>.

23. Q: If an applicant who is eligible for fee subsidy under PEVS in 2016/17 intends to apply for additional financial assistance under KCFRS, how should he/she lodge his/her application?

A: The applicant should pay attention to details of application for KCFRS in the 2016/17 school year to be announced by the SFO in due course. The announcement will be made around July 2016. For enquiries, please visit the SFO's homepage at <http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo> or call the SFO's 24-hour hotline at 2802 2345 (the customer service officer of the 1823 will attend to the calls on a non-stop basis).