

Education Bureau Circular No. 10/2018

Promotion of Reading in Schools

(Note: This circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors, Heads and Teachers of all Government and Aided schools (including special schools), Caput Schools and Schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme – for action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information.)

Purpose

The purpose of this circular is to inform all schools of the disbursement of the Promotion of Reading Grant and the enhanced measures to provide support for reading in schools.

Background

2. “Reading to Learn” has been adopted as one of the Key Tasks since the curriculum reform in 2001. In the updated *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* (2017), schools are encouraged to extend “Reading to Learn” to “Reading across the Curriculum” and “Language across the Curriculum” with a view to broadening students’ knowledge base and connecting their learning experiences in different subjects.

3. Effective promotion of reading, in particular to achieve the desirable effect of “Reading across the Curriculum”, does not solely hinge upon a single factor or two. Only through synergy and co-ordinated efforts can the effectiveness be maximised. Building on the existing foundation and strengths, the Education Bureau (EDB) will capitalise on the synergy among stakeholders to create a reading atmosphere and foster a reading culture. Through innovative, interesting and diverse reading activities, we hope to nurture students’ interest and help them develop a reading habit from a young age so that they will enjoy reading and develop their thinking skills and creativity through reading.

Details

Promotion of Reading Grant

4. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB will disburse a new Promotion of Reading Grant to all public sector schools. Schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) will also benefit from this. The Promotion of Reading Grant will be subsumed in the DSS unit subsidy rates. Deployment of the new grant is not limited to the Chinese Language and the English Language subjects. Nor is it confined to the procurement of books. Schools can use the new grant to organise different types of school-based reading activities, including subscriptions to web-based reading schemes, hire of service providers such as writers, professional storytellers as well as organisation of seminars, storytelling and parent-child reading sessions with a view to nurturing a good reading culture in schools and enabling students to derive pleasure and enjoyment from reading while enhancing further their reading abilities. (Please refer to Annex 1 for details of the disbursement of the Promotion of Reading Grant.)

Enhanced Measures to Provide Support for Reading

5. The EDB will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to support primary and secondary schools to promote reading effectively. The enhanced measures to provide support for reading include:

(1) Reading Information Website

6. The EDB will enhance the existing reading website for dissemination of reading-related information, including regular production of e-posters to provide schools with up-to-date news on reading activities and information. (Reading Information Website: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/4-key-tasks/reading-to-learn/index.html>) Schools are encouraged to visit the website on a regular basis for the latest information.

(2) Theme-based Reading

7. The EDB will propose reading themes for schools to conduct theme-based reading. Schools are encouraged to motivate students to borrow books on the related themes and organise different types of school-based reading activities such as storytelling and play-acting as complementary activities. The EDB will provide recommended booklists on different reading themes to facilitate the implementation of theme-based reading. The reading themes for the 2018/19 school year are – the first term: (1) Chinese History and Culture, (2) Healthy Living; the second term: (1) Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education, (2) Moral Education. The EDB will inform schools of the proposed reading themes via the Reading Information Website.

(3) The “e-Read Pass” Scheme

8. In view of the preference for e-reading among young people, the EDB will launch the “e-Read Pass” Scheme¹ in the 2018/19 school year. The Scheme is built upon the existing provision of online reading services by the Hong Kong Education City (HKEdCity). The existing platform will be enhanced so that different stakeholders (including teachers, students and parents), different knowledge areas and different reading experiences are connected, thereby facilitating the effective promotion of electronic reading. The “e-Read Pass” Scheme will engage different stakeholders, e.g. publishing organisations, schools, teachers and parents to create a richer reading environment for students. Some examples are collaborating with publishing organisations to provide a larger number of appropriate e-books for students at different key stages of learning, implementing a pilot scheme to provide reading accounts for parents to encourage parent-child reading, and encouraging parents, teachers and students to participate in diverse reading and sharing activities via the online/electronic platform. We encourage schools to participate actively in the Scheme to promote reading of e-books among students. (For details, please refer to the website of “e-Read Scheme” of HKEdCity: <https://www.hkedcity.net/ereadscheme/en/>)

(4) ETV Programmes

9. The ETV Unit is producing a promotional series of programmes to feature good practices of schools in the promotion of reading. The first episode “Lifelong Love of Reading: The Reading Atmosphere in Schools” was released on RTHK31 and TVB Pearl in April 2018 and can be retrieved at the ETV website of EDB (<https://etv.edb.gov.hk>) and HKEdCity ETV website (<https://etv.hkedcity.net>). The ETV Unit is producing the second episode “Lifelong Love of Reading: Sharing the Reading Joy”, the one-minute trailer of which has been produced. Schools are encouraged to note the date of release, recommend the programme to students or view it with students and gain insights from it.

¹ The “e” in the “e-Read Pass” is taken from the first letter of the words “easy”, “enjoyable”, “extensive”, “electronic” and “experiential”. The “Pass” symbolises a passage connecting different areas of knowledge through reading, and signifies the close collaboration between the EDB and other organisations and groups in the promotion of reading across the city. The “e-Read Pass” Scheme will provide an opportunity for students and parents to achieve *extensive* reading through *electronic* platforms, making reading an *easy, enjoyable* and *experiential* activity.

(5) Strengthened Collaboration with Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

10. Apart from collaborating with the Libraries Section of the LCSD to provide a series of support services for kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres, since the start of 2018, the EDB has contributed articles to the bimonthly publication “Newsletter” of Hong Kong Public Libraries of LCSD for the promotion of reading. Related recommended book titles are also provided by the Hong Kong Public Libraries as support to encourage reading to learn in the community. Schools are encouraged to refer to “Newsletter” for the recommendations to facilitate the arrangement of the related reading activities in schools.

(6) Book Recommendations by Celebrities

11. The EDB will invite celebrities to share their reading experience and recommend good books to students via the Reading Information Website, TV stations and different social media to raise public interest and awareness about reading. Schools are also encouraged to bring the events to students’ attention.

Enquiry

12. For enquiries, please contact Ms Mavis YU of the Curriculum Development Institute on 3698 4442/2339 3152.

Sheridan LEE
(for Secretary for Education)

Guidelines on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant

Purpose

1. To support schools in strengthening the promotion of reading and encourage students to develop a good reading habit from a young age, the EDB will disburse a Promotion of Reading Grant to all public sector schools starting from the 2018/19 school year.

Amount of Grant

2. The EDB will disburse the grant to all public sector schools. As for schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), the grant will be subsumed in the DSS unit subsidy rates. The amounts of the grant for all public sector schools for the 2018/19 school year are indicated in the table below:

Primary Schools

No. of Approved Classes*	Amount of Grant/Year
12 or below	\$20,000
13 to 24	\$30,000
25 or above	\$40,000

* “Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme in Primary Schools” will not be taken into consideration in the calculation of number of classes.

Secondary Schools

No. of Approved Classes	Amount of Grant/Year
18 or below	\$50,000
19 to 24	\$60,000
25 or above	\$70,000

Special Schools

	Amount of Grant/Year
All special schools^	\$30,000

^ A special school with both primary and secondary classes is counted as one school.

The amount of grant will be adjusted in accordance with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index each year.

Usage of Grant

3. Under the principle of school-based management, the incorporated management committees (IMC)/school management committees (SMC) (for Aided, Caput and DSS Schools), and SMC (for Government Schools) should set appropriate goals and formulate strategies based on the actual situation of their schools to make good use of the grant to enhance students' learning effectiveness. Schools should also conduct regular reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of resources according to the goals set. In formulating a plan on the promotion of reading, schools should discuss with teachers of different subject panels how to make effective use of the grant to promote reading activities and build a good reading atmosphere, so that students can derive pleasure and enjoyment from reading while enhancing further their reading abilities.

4. Schools can flexibly use the grant for:

- Procuring reading resources, including both printed books and e-books
Schools can use the grant to procure different kinds of books, which include Chinese and English printed books and e-books. With the change of students' reading mode from reading printed books to online reading and reading e-books, schools can flexibly use the grant for procuring e-books and subscriptions to web-based reading schemes to engage students in different kinds of reading activities, including cross-curricular reading activities that cover different subjects and themes.
- Organising learning activities related to the promotion of reading
In addition to launching school-based reading activities and reading award schemes to create a good reading atmosphere and increase students' motivation and engagement in reading, schools can also use the grant for organising diversified and fun activities to promote reading, for example, themed-based reading activities on STEM education, Chinese history and culture, moral education or healthy living. Schools can also use the grant to procure services for organising learning activities to promote reading, including subscriptions to web-based reading schemes, and for hiring services from and collaborate with service providers such as writers and

professional storytellers to conduct seminars, storytelling and parent-child reading sessions etc., to promote reading.

5. Schools may use the grant to arrange different modes of reading activities in accordance with their school contexts. As it is a purpose-specific grant, schools shall use the grant to meet the expenses on the promotion of reading and related activities as mentioned in Paragraph 4. If found inadequate, the grant can be topped up by the schools with the use of other government funding, including the surplus under the General Domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG)/ Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant (EOEBG) (for aided schools) and fee subsidy (for caput secondary schools). If there is still unsettled deficit, it has to be met by schools' own fund/non-government fund. Government schools may deploy the surplus of the Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant (ESCBG) to top up the grant, if required.

Funding Disbursement and Accounting Arrangements

6. The grant will be disbursed to schools with effect from the 2018/19 school year. For aided and caput schools, the grant will be disbursed in September every year. For government schools, the grant will be allocated in the form of budget allocation in two batches in September and April of the school year; separate allocation for the unspent balance (if any) of the preceding financial year will be provided at the beginning of the next financial year.

7. Schools will be required to observe the established principles and requirements on the use of public funds as promulgated by the EDB when using the grant. These include, among others, hiring outside services and making purchases according to fair and transparent procedures with reference to the relevant EDB circulars and guidelines as appropriate, and preparation of a separate ledger for proper recording of accounting transactions. Aided and caput schools are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all the incomes and expenditures chargeable to the grant and submit the annual audited accounts to the EDB for examination in accordance with the existing requirements. Transfer of funds out of this grant is not allowed. For government schools, the grant will be provided in the form of budget allocation. Expenditure should be charged to the user code assigned and the expenditure in a financial year could not exceed the allocation in that year. Schools are also required to pay attention to the prevailing ordinances, regulations and circulars related to the procurement of outside services and handling of accounts, etc. Transfer of funds out of this grant is not allowed.

Surplus Retention

8. Schools are required to optimise the use of the grant for the respective school year. Therefore, schools are, in principle, not expected to retain surplus of this grant. Nevertheless, we understand that some schools may not be able to follow the original plan to use up their funding within the school/financial year due to unforeseen circumstances in organising reading promotion activities. We thus allow schools to retain a reasonable amount of unspent balance in a school/financial year and carry it forward for use in the subsequent school/financial year as detailed in the paragraphs below.

9. For aided and caput schools, we allow schools to retain an amount of unspent balance up to 12-month provision of the grant. The EDB will claw back any amount in excess of the said cap based on schools' annual audited accounts. Transfer of funds/unspent balance out of this grant is not allowed.

10. Government schools will basically have the same arrangement as for aided and caput schools, except that they will be accounted for on a financial year basis and any unspent balance in excess of the cap will lapse at the end of the relevant financial year.

Accountability

11. In accordance with the "School Development and Accountability Framework", the IMC/SMC of the respective school is accountable for the proper use of the grant for its intended objectives. Public sector and DSS schools receiving the grant are required to plan for the reading promotion activities and incorporate the Plan on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant for the school year into the Annual School Plan for endorsement by their IMC/SMC. Schools are also required to briefly introduce the intended objectives and outline the activities to promote reading and how to use the grant in the Plan. Schools should also include the details of the activities held and the financial report in the School Report of the school year concerned for submission and endorsement by their IMC/SMC. Schools are not required to submit the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant to the EDB. However, schools are required to upload the Annual School Plan and School Report (which consist of the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant respectively) endorsed by their IMC/SMC onto the homepage of the school for the sake of enhancing transparency and in accordance with the established practice. Please refer

to Annexes 2 and 3 for the templates of the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant respectively.

Points to Note

(The following examples are not exhaustive and are provided for reference only.)

12. Examples of appropriate use of the grant:
 - To purchase printed books and e-books including any appropriate reading resources for students
 - To subscribe to web-based reading schemes
 - To hire writers and professional storytellers to conduct talks for students or parents to promote reading
 - To hire services from external service providers (e.g. tertiary institutions, non-profit making organisations, academic associations and professional bodies) for organising student activities related to the promotion of reading in schools
 - To pay the application fees for activities or competitions related to the promotion of reading
 - To subsidise students for their participation in or application for any reading related activities or courses provided by local tertiary institutions, non-profit making organisations, academic associations and professional bodies (e.g. Reading Camp)

13. Examples of inappropriate use of the grant:
 - To hire services from external service providers for organising activities that are irrelevant to the promotion of reading
 - To purchase equipment/tools for school administrative purposes
 - To purchase computer hardware/software for general purposes
 - To purchase mobile computing devices
 - To employ teaching/non-teaching staff
 - To serve guests with food and beverages
 - To subsidise teachers for their participation in local, regional and overseas professional development programmes

(Template)

[This template is for reference only. Schools can adapt its format to cater for their specific needs.]

Plan on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant

_____ School Year

The major objectives for Promotion of Reading: (e.g. creating a reading culture)

	Item*	Estimated Expenses (\$)
1.	Purchase of Books	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Printed books	
	<input type="checkbox"/> e-Books	
2.	Web-based Reading Schemes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> e-Read Scheme	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other scheme : _____	
3.	Reading Activities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring writers, professional storytellers, etc. to conduct talks	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire of service from external service providers to organise student activities related to the promotion of reading	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Paying the application fees for activities and competitions related to the promotion of reading	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Subsidising students for their participation in and application for reading related activities or courses	
4.	Other : _____	

* Please tick the appropriate boxes or provide details.

(Template)

[This template is for reference only. Schools can adapt its format to cater for their specific needs.]

Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant

_____ **School Year**

Part 1: Evaluation of the Effectiveness

1. Evaluation of the objective: (e.g. evaluating if the objective of “creating a reading culture” is achieved and any change is required based on student attitude, loan of books, engagement in reading activities)

2. Evaluation of strategies: (e.g. evaluating the effectiveness of strategies employed to create a reading culture based on the change of number of books borrowed by students, the scope of the reading activities)

Part 2: Financial Report

	Item*	Actual expenses (\$)
1.	Purchase of Books	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Printed books	
	<input type="checkbox"/> e-Books	
2.	Web-based Reading Schemes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> e-Read Scheme	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other scheme : _____	
3.	Reading Activities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring writers, professional storytellers, etc. to conduct talks	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire of service from external service providers to organise student activities related to the promotion of reading	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Paying the application fees for activities and competitions related to the promotion of reading	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Subsidising students for their participation in and application for reading related activities or courses	
4.	Other : _____	
		Total:
		Unspent Balance:

* Please tick the appropriate boxes or provide details.