

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM No. 82/2020

From : Secretary for Education

To : Supervisors, Heads and Teachers of all Government and Aided schools (including special schools), Caput Schools and Schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme schools – for action

Ref. : EDB(CDI/CRC-SL)/1-50/1

Date: 18 June 2020

**Summer Reading Programme –
“Gift Book Pilot Scheme (2020)” and
Free Use of “eRead Scheme”**

Summary

This circular memorandum aims to inform schools of the details of the captioned Summer Reading Programme, including the “Gift Book Pilot Scheme (2020)” and the Free Use of “eRead Scheme” for about 6 months.

Background

2. The Education Bureau (EDB) has been promoting “Reading to Learn” through various measures to support schools’ implementation of diversified reading activities to complement the curriculum, thereby developing students’ reading interest and habits from a young age to enhance their reading skills and learning capabilities. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has disbursed to all public sector schools the Promotion of Reading Grant, which can be used to organise different types of school-based reading activities to create a reading atmosphere and culture. In addition, the EDB has been synergising the efforts from the publishing sector and professional organisations in the organisation of large-scale reading promotion activities, such as the “Joyful Reading Carnival 2019”, to encourage parent-child reading.

Details

“Gift Book Pilot Scheme (2020)”

3. Due to the deferral of class resumption caused by COVID-19, schools adopted various learning modes to support students’ learning at home. As the summer vacation is approaching, the EDB launches the “Gift Book Pilot Scheme (2020)” to offer free printed books to all primary and secondary students in the public sector (including special schools) and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, with an aim to encourage leisure reading anytime and anywhere during the summer holiday, and nurture students’ good reading habits. The Scheme has the full support from the Hong Kong Publishing Federation.

4. Schools can make effective use of the printed books offered by the EDB to set the objectives and directions for reading activities in the next school year, such as arranging sharing sessions to encourage students to exchange their views on the books. Schools may also organise class-based / level-based book crossing activities to help students develop a sense of gratitude and learn to cherish what they have, thereby nurturing their positive values.

Special Grant for Book Purchase

5. The EDB will offer a one-off grant to all public sector (including special schools) and DSS schools for their procurement of printed books from the designated book lists on selected themes and distribution of the books to students studying in P1 – P6 / S1 – S5 in 2019/20 s.y., so that students can enjoy reading during the summer vacation.

6. The EDB will allocate the one-off grant in accordance with the number of students of each school. As the book prices vary, the grant allocated to each school will be based on a rough estimate of \$100 per head multiplied by the total number of P1 – P6 / S1 – S5 student enrolment of the school, as recorded in the head count conducted in September 2019. For example, if a secondary school is recorded having a total of 460 S1 – S5 students, the school will be offered a grant of \$46,000. It should be noted that the one-off grant is meant not for providing each student with \$100 to purchase books, nor does it guarantee that students can receive printed books of the same value. It is entirely the school's decision on how to utilise the books offered by the EDB, including whether the books would be used for book crossing in the whole school or certain levels.

Arrangement for Book Selection

7. Schools are required to select appropriate printed books from the EDB's designated book lists on four themes, namely Chinese History and Culture, Healthy Living, Moral Education and STEM Education. The book titles and relevant information have been uploaded to the EDB's "Summer Reading Programme" webpage (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/SummerReadingProgramme>).



8. Schools can exercise discretion on book selection according to school contexts and operational needs. Schools can select appropriate books from the designated book lists with reference to students' abilities and interests, or let students choose from the book lists. In the selection process, teachers in charge of promotion of reading and teacher librarians can discuss with other stakeholders, such as Parent-Teacher Association, to make appropriate book selection arrangements, taking into consideration

the work and development in the promotion of reading in school. Schools can repeatedly select certain books to facilitate students’ sharing.

Procurement Procedure

9. Schools can procure the books from service providers with reference to the “Book Procurement Form”, which has been uploaded to the EDB’s “Summer Reading Programme” webpage (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/SummerReadingProgramme>) for schools to download.

10. When using the one-off grant, schools are required to observe the established principles and requirements, including the relevant circulars and guidelines (if applicable) on the use of public funds as promulgated by the EDB, to ensure fair and transparent book procurement procedures. Government schools should observe the established book procurement procedures applicable to all government schools for the procurement arrangements.

11. The EDB understands that the book procurement procedures take time. To ensure that students can get their books before the summer vacation and enjoy leisure reading during the holiday, the EDB has adopted a one-off arrangement in the procurement procedures, which allows non-government schools (including aided schools, caput schools and DSS schools) to shorten the quotation period to one week for written quotations of printed books amounting over \$50,000 to \$200,000. This arrangement is valid for this pilot scheme only and will not constitute precedents. Government schools can observe the established book procurement procedures applicable to all government schools for the procurement arrangements.

12. Schools should make arrangements for the book procurement as soon as possible with reference to the following schedule and place order by **9 July 2020**.

Date	Task
18 June to 24 June	Arrangement for book selection
24 June to 3 July	Invitation for quotations to service providers
3 July to 9 July	Placement of order
Late July	Book delivery to school by service providers

Disbursement of Grant and Accounting Arrangement

13. The one-off grant will be disbursed to schools as a provisional grant according to the number of students of each school. Schools will receive the grant by the end of

July 2020. Upon the deduction of the actual amount spent on the book purchase, schools should return the unspent balance to the EDB.

14. Aided schools, caput schools and DSS schools are required to keep a separate account ledger to reflect all income and expenditure of the one-off grant and submit the audited account to the EDB according to the prevailing practices. Government schools should make payment with the assigned user code / deposit account and observe the relevant ordinances, regulations and circulars on details about the procurement of books and accounting treatments.

15. If a deficit is incurred on the one-off grant, aided schools may deploy the surplus under Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant (EOEBG) or the General Domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG). Caput schools and DSS schools may deploy the surplus under the Caput Fee Subsidy and DSS Subsidy respectively. If there is still unsettled deficit, it has to be met by the schools' own fund / non-government fund. For government schools, the surplus under Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant (ESCBG) may be deployed if necessary

Surplus Arrangements

16. Schools are required to use the one-off grant for the purchase of books for students **on or before 31 August 2020**. The surplus of the one-off grant will be returned to the EDB on reimbursement on an actual expense basis. The expenses concerned must be cleared **on or before 30 November 2020** and the EDB will claw back the unspent balance **by 30 November 2020**. Schools are required to submit relevant information and documents for verification. For details, please refer to the "Summer Reading Programme" webpage (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/SummerReadingProgramme>). The one-off grant should be used solely for the purchase and distribution of printed books to every student and schools are not allowed to use the grant or the surplus for other purposes or transfer it to other accounts.

Points to Note

17. Schools are allowed to use the one-off grant for the purchase of printed book only. Examples of inappropriate use of the grant are as follows:

- Purchase of books out of the designated book lists
- Purchase of electronic books
- Payment for online reading programmes
- Payment for the expenses of reading activities
- Purchase of books with the grant for the collection of school library

18. If schools cannot give out the books under special circumstances (such as students' leaving or long-term non-attendance), schools may handle the books as appropriate, such as asking the students to collect the books from school within a time limit or giving them to students as presents with the endorsement of the school management committee, and duly record the arrangement.

Free Use of “eRead Scheme”

19. In addition, to support schools' promotion of extensive reading, schools can participate in the free use of Hong Kong Education City's “eRead Scheme” from 16 July to 31 December 2020. “eRead Scheme” is a school-based e-book subscription service for primary and secondary schools. It provides a wide range of quality Chinese and English e-books in various categories and levels. Teachers and students of the participating schools have unlimited access to 100 books during the service period. The reading platform records reading data of each student for teachers to better understand students' reading habits, so as to devise appropriate strategies for promoting reading. The related details are at **Annex 1 (Free Use of “eRead Scheme”)**.

Enquiries

20. For enquiries about the “Gift Book Pilot Scheme (2020)”, please contact Mr Jack WONG of the Curriculum Resources Section, Curriculum Development Institute at 3698 3578. For enquires about and the Free Use of “eRead Scheme”, please contact Hong Kong Education City at 2624 1000.

Dr Gloria PW CHAN
for Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections - *for information*

Free Use of “eRead Scheme”

About the Scheme

- “eRead Scheme” is a school-based e-book subscription service provided by Hong Kong Education City (HKEdCity) to support schools in promoting extensive reading. It provides a wide range of quality Chinese and English e-books suitable for primary and secondary schools in various categories and levels. Participating schools can form their own school-based “reading package” by selecting suitable titles from more than 2,000 local and overseas e-books. Schools participating in the Free Use of the “eRead Scheme” can subscribe to the primary or secondary package with 100 books for about half a year. The service period is from 16 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. Each school’s reading package comprises 30 core books, with the remaining books to be selected by the school.
- During the service period, teachers and students of the participating schools have unlimited access to the books in their “reading package” via a web browser or the “EdBookShelf” mobile app, with the use of computers, tablets or smartphones. The system provides reading data for teachers to better understand students’ reading performance and preferences, so as to devise appropriate reading strategies in school.

Features of the Scheme

- Unlimited access by all teachers and students during the subscription period without any logistical arrangements for book circulation
- Reading data available for better understanding of students’ reading performance and preferences
- e-Book distribution function for handy book recommendations to students
- Reading offline by downloading the e-books using the “EdBookShelf” mobile app
- Further subscription to other reading packages of the “eRead Scheme”, extension of the subscription period and/or increasing the number of e-books based on schools’ needs, with the use of the surplus from the Promotion of Reading Grant

EdBookShelf Functions

- Cross-platform support (Android, iOS and web browsers)
- Supporting both Chinese and English interfaces

- Book-marking, note-taking and annotation functions
- Inbuilt Cantonese / Putonghua / English text-to-speech function
- Integration with multilingual “Dictionary” in mobile devices

Arrangements of Free Use of the “eRead Scheme”

- Participating schools should assign a teacher in-charge to complete the online application form (https://edcity.hk/edb_eread) and co-ordinate the book selection.
- After the participating schools have submitted the application form, HKEdCity will provide a link to the ‘Selective Book List’ web page via email. The teacher-in-charge can browse the book list, select books that are suitable for their school, and submit such list of selected books to HKEdCity in order to form their own school-based reading package.
- The “reading package” will be ready in about two weeks* after the school has submitted the list of selected books.
- Teachers and students can download the EdBookShelf mobile app, or go to the “eRead Scheme” website (<https://www.hkedcity.net/ereadscheme>) via a web browser, and log in with their HKEdCity accounts to start reading.
- The service period of the Free Use of “eRead Scheme” is effective until 31 December 2020.



Notes

- Participating schools should update their teacher and student account information through HKEdCity’s membership system, and distribute the related information to teachers and students in order for them to enjoy the “reading package”.
- The online application form is open to schools for submission from 18 June onwards. Schools which have applied can select their books on the “Selective Book List” web page and submit their list of selected books from 1 July onwards. Schools which have submitted their list of selected books by 9 July may enjoy their “reading package” starting from 16 July*. Schools which submit their list of selected books after 9 July may enjoy their “reading package” about two weeks afterwards*.

For more details, please refer to the “eRead Scheme” website.

Schedule for Reference

From 18 June 2020 onwards	Participating schools complete the online application form.
From 1 July 2020 onwards	Schools select books from the ‘Selective Book List’ web page and submit the list of selected books for their “reading package”.
From 16 July 2020 onwards	“Reading package” is ready for use by teachers and students from schools which have submitted their list of selected books by 9 July.
31 December 2020	Free Use of “eRead Scheme” ends.

Enquiries

Tel: 2624 1000

Email: info@hkedcity.net

Time: 8:00 am - 10:00 pm, Mondays to Saturdays (except Public Holidays)

* Under the special circumstance where a particular title from a school’s list of selected books is not available on time, the school may opt to replace it with another title, or start with other selected books while waiting for the title to be added to the reading package.