

Guidelines on the Use of the Life-wide Learning and Sister School Grant (LWLSSG)

Principles on the use of the LWLSSG

1. Having regard to the needs of school development and student learning, schools are required to formulate appropriate objectives and strategies in accordance with the learning goals of Hong Kong school curriculum recommended by the Curriculum Development Council and curriculum objectives of relevant Key Learning Areas (KLAs)/subjects concerned (please refer to relevant [curriculum documents of the KLAs/subjects](#) for details) and arrange life-wide learning activities that suit the stages of students' cognitive and affective development; and conduct exchange activities with Mainland sister schools at different levels to tie in with the objectives of the Sister School Scheme and schools' development needs. These activities can **enrich students' learning experiences, consolidate and deepen their classroom learning, help them develop lifelong learning capabilities and achieve the aim of whole-person development. In addition, they enable teachers and students to deepen their understanding of our country through first-hand experiences, enhance their sense of national identity, or promote teachers' professional development and school development.**
2. Schools should flexibly deploy the LWLSSG, in conjunction with resources provided by the EDB or others where appropriate, to holistically plan and arrange life-wide learning activities (such as Mainland educational exchange activities, local and non-local study tours, outdoor education camps) in line with the learning goals and curriculum areas, and conduct exchange activities with Mainland sister schools at different levels. *With effect from the 2026/27 school year, the LWLSSG is included in the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant (EOEBG), as one of the school-specific constituent grants, for aided schools with an Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) (aided IMC schools)/the Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant (ESCBG) for government schools/the recurrent subsidy for DSS schools (DSS subsidy) for DSS schools. Based on the principle of versatile use of resources across various purposes, in respect of the applicability of different types of expenditure items and related stipulations, aided IMC schools (including special schools), all government schools and DSS schools are also required to observe the circulars, circular memorandum and guidelines pertaining to the applicable grants/subsidy issued by the EDB when deploying the LWLSSG, including but not limited to the [EOEBG User Guide](#) for aided IMC schools, the prevailing Guide on Financial Management of the EDB for government schools, and [EDB Circular No. 17/2012 on Use of Government and Non-government Funds in Direct Subsidy Scheme \(DSS\) Schools](#) for DSS schools.*
3. *School leaders should maintain good communication with teachers of all KLAs/functional groups to discuss the resources needed for different projects and allocate resources as appropriate. Sufficient manpower should be arranged for coordination and management of resources in relation to life-wide learning and sister school exchanges, including the LWLSSG. Timely review should be conducted to evaluate whether the resources are effectively utilised in accordance with the stipulated objectives.*

4. The LWLSSG should be used for enriching students' learning experiences and conducting exchange activities with Mainland sister schools. It should not be used for employing teaching or non-teaching staff. Adhering to the principles of fiscal prudence and avoiding extravagance, schools should ensure that all expenditures are incurred to serve the purposes specified for the LWLSSG and within their applicable allocation ceilings. They should also keep in view the cost-effectiveness in order **to benefit as many students as possible**, fulfil their learning needs, and promote teachers' professional development and school development.
5. While the LWLSSG is applicable to all students, it does not mean that each student must receive equal funding or an amount equivalent to the per capita grant rate. Nor does it mean that schools have to provide all life-wide learning and sister school exchange activities free of charge. If a school needs to charge a fee for an activity, it should follow the established practice to set out the school-based criteria for determining the fee and inform parents and students of the arrangement accordingly.
6. Schools should strictly observe the relevant circulars and guidelines on the use of public funds issued by the EDB, deploy the LWLSSG in a fair and transparent manner subject to the stipulated principles and requirements, and be held accountable for its proper use. For instance, aided schools (including special schools) and caput schools are required to follow the procedures in the EDB Circular No. 4/2013 on *Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools and the "Guidelines on Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools"*. DSS schools are also required to follow the procurement procedures for aided schools or any school-based procurement policy and procedures approved by the School Management Committee (SMC)/IMC concerned, and documented for information of stakeholders.
7. Schools **should not confine the use of the LWLSSG to a single project/area or a small number of students**, but this does not imply that the LWLSSG can only be used for whole-school functions. Prior approval from the SMC/IMC must be obtained for organising individual activities/projects that incur higher costs.
8. Schools should set up school-based mechanisms to handle issues in relation to the LWLSSG, for example, the fee arrangements for students who request to withdraw after being approved to participate in an activity.

Ambit

9. Schools may deploy the LWLSSG to:
 - organise experiential learning activities, such as Mainland educational exchange activities, local and non-local study tours¹, and outdoor education camps, which are in line with the learning goals and curriculum objectives, and suit the stages of students' cognitive and affective development, so as to infuse life-wide learning strategies into different

¹ Schools may organise more expeditions and exchange activities to the Mainland or countries/regions along the Belt and Road to enhance students' understanding of national conditions and policies. Provided that the principles on the use of relevant funding are observed, schools may use the LWLSSG in conjunction with the Mainland Exchange Programmes for students (including the subvention schemes) of the EDB to make up for the subsidies as necessary when organising related activities.

KLAs/subjects and cross-curricular learning activities;

- enrich students' five essential learning experiences, including values education, intellectual development, community service, physical and aesthetic development, and career-related experiences (covering life planning education from upper primary to secondary levels). For details, please refer to [Primary Education Curriculum Guide \(2024\)](#) (currently in Chinese only), [Secondary Education Curriculum Guide \(2017\)](#) and the curriculum documents of relevant KLAs/subjects;
- organise exchange activities with Mainland sister schools at student, teacher and school management levels;
- in response to the latest educational development and students' needs, enhance the effort in promoting the following three areas -
 - patriotic education²;
 - digital education, artificial intelligence (AI) and STEAM education, etc.;
 - student mental health³;
- procure equipment, apparatus, instruments (including repair and maintenance fees), mobile applications or software, devices, consumables, and learning resources necessary for implementation of activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG⁴ (~~Note: The annual total expenditure should not exceed 15% of the allocation of the LWLSSG for the respective school year~~); and
- defray the expenses incurred by teachers for leading student activities⁵.

Examples on the use of the LWLSSG

10. Listed below are some examples on the use of the LWLSSG that are in line with the principles:

- Subsidising students' participation in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised⁶ by schools, such as activities with clear learning objectives through hire of services, co-

² As an integral part of the school curriculum, national education (NE) and national security education (NSE) at primary and secondary levels have included elements and spirit of patriotic education, covering national history, national affairs, Chinese culture, national geography and the Constitution and Basic Law education, which have been incorporated into various KLAs and related subjects at secondary and primary levels in Hong Kong. Intertwined with values education and life-wide learning activities, NE and NSE contribute to students' crucial learning experiences.

³ Related webpage: <https://mentalhealth.edb.gov.hk/en/promotion-at-the-universal-level/promotional-resources-for-schools/index.html>

⁴ The equipment or items purchased by deployment of the LWLSSG are school property. Schools may lend the items to students based on school context and students' learning needs. If so, schools are required to devise a fair borrowing mechanism and keep proper loan records. ~~For government schools, the LWLSSG must not be used to purchase minor machinery and equipment costing more than \$200,000 each.~~

⁵ Expenses incurred by teachers (for special schools, relevant teaching and non-teaching staff of the school may be included as necessary) for leading student activities (including the expenditures approved by SMC/IMC for teachers to escort students in study tours outside Hong Kong or sister school exchange activities in the Mainland in relation to the discharge of their duties) should be reasonable, necessary for educational purposes and spent in a cost-effective manner.

⁶ Activities recognised by schools refer to those organised by external organisations, and the schools have confidence in such organisations and acknowledge that the contents of the activities could help students achieve the objectives of life-wide learning (e.g. schools may nominate students to participate in programmes/activities/competitions organised by post-secondary institutions, sports associations and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department).

organised activities, school-based learning activities, extra-curricular/co-curricular activities, or theme-based cross-curricular activities;

- Defraying the necessary activity expenses incurred in enriching students' learning experiences -
 - Values education: e.g. leadership training and experiential learning camps;
 - Intellectual development (in line with the curriculum): e.g. visits to exhibitions and field trips;
 - Community service: e.g. service learning and uniformed group activities;
 - Physical and aesthetic development: e.g. sports training/competitions, drama courses/performances and outdoor education camps;
 - Career-related experiences: e.g. job shadowing programmes and visits to enterprises;
- Defraying the necessary activity expenses incurred in the promotion of patriotic education -
 - taking part in the activities organised by the EDB or other relevant organisations, and organising school programmes, such as training for flag-guards, visits to patriotic education bases and arrangement of competitions/exhibitions on national affairs in school, in order to provide students with diversified learning experiences, inheriting the national spirit and enhancing nationhood;
 - organising Chinese classical prose reading appreciation/competition, learning and appreciation of the prestigious Chinese traditional culture (e.g. calligraphy, teaism, Chinese musical instruments, Chinese martial arts);
 - paying visits to the anti-Japanese War monuments/facilities (such as “Wu Kau Tang Martyrs Memorial Garden”, “Hong Kong Sha Tau Kok Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall”, “Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence”), watching film shows about national affairs, and participating in Mainland exchanges/study tours;
- Defraying the necessary activity expenses incurred in the promotion of digital education, AI and STEAM education, etc. and innovation and technology learning for all, such as planning and organising relevant learning activities, purchasing relevant learning materials, subsidising student visits to relevant education venues or organisations (including theme parks and Hong Kong Wetland Park) and subsidising students' participation in relevant local and non-local competitions and exchange activities;
- Defraying the necessary activity expenses incurred in heightening the promotion of student mental health -
 - With reference to the *4Rs Mental Health Charter*⁷, organising activities relevant to the promotion of student mental health or procuring related services or materials and learning and teaching resources;

⁷ Please refer to the EDBC No. 60/2024 on *Mental Health@School – 4Rs Mental Health Charter* for details: <https://applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBCM/EDBCM24060E.pdf>

- Subsidising students' participation in local or non-local activities/competitions by covering the expenses incurred for registration, transportation⁸, accommodation, and procuring related materials or apparel; and
- Subsidising students' participation⁹ in study tours outside Hong Kong;
- Subsidising students' participation in fee-charging activities or training programmes (e.g. outdoor education camps, scientific exploration activities and sports training) that are closely linked with different KLAs/subjects and cross-curricular learning organised by local post-secondary institutions, non-profit-making organisations, academic associations and professional bodies;
- Deploying a portion of the LWLSSG to purchase -
 - equipment (including video-conferencing devices¹⁰), apparatus, instruments and consumables (e.g. virtual reality tools) necessary for implementation of activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG;
 - mobile applications or relevant software (e.g. software for creating virtual reality or 3D graphics) necessary for implementation of activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG;
 - materials and equipment (e.g. musical instruments, sports equipment, self-learning resource packages) necessary for implementation of activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG;
- Engaging scholars and professionals, etc. as speakers in thematic seminars under the ambit of the LWLSSG;
- Procuring services from external organisations or professionals/coaches to assist in organising activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG (e.g. training on multiple intelligences, physical and aesthetic training, life planning, digital education, AI and STEAM education promotion activities);
- Meeting the fees of outdoor education camp, including camp and course fees;

⁸ The most suitable and economical mode of transportation according to needs should be selected.

⁹ The LWLSSG should not cover personal items and consumption, or personal comprehensive and/or travel insurance (except comprehensive group travel insurance). The EDB takes out a Block Insurance Policy (BIP) for government, aided and caput schools (details are available on <https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-sch/sch-safety.html>); yet the related insurance policy should not be regarded as a comprehensive personal insurance coverage for the participants (including students, teachers and school management) of life-wide learning or sister school exchange activities organised/recognised by schools. When organising study tours outside Hong Kong or conducting exchange activities with sister schools in the Mainland by procuring services, schools should invite quotations from local licensed travel agents for the provision of Group Comprehensive Travel Insurance Policy and procure such services. Nevertheless, if the participants of life-wide learning or sister school exchange activities wish to have a comprehensive personal insurance coverage, they may acquire it separately from any insurance company.

¹⁰ If schools conduct online exchanges, they should make use of their existing resources/equipment. In case there are genuine needs to deploy the LWLSSG for related procurement, schools should plan the usage prudently and ensure that the equipment can be fully utilised for activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG.

- Defraying the expenses on the visa for students or teachers participating in non-local study tours or sister school exchanges in the Mainland¹¹ ~~(Note: The annual total expenditure should not exceed 5% of the allocation of the LWLSSG for the respective school year);~~
- Utilisation on sister school exchange activities and relevant support, such as:
 - expenses incurred by school management, teachers and students for visiting Mainland sister schools^{9,12};
 - expenses on activities jointly organised with Mainland sister schools incurred in Hong Kong;
 - expenses on breakfasts/lunches/dinners of school principals and teachers in relation to their discharge of duties in sister school activities organised in the Mainland¹³ (bound by the limits of such expenses per occasion and per head quoted in the “*Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant User Guide for Aided Schools which have established an Incorporated Management Committee*”/“*Operating Expenses Block Grant User Guide for Aided Schools*”); and
 - expenses on food and beverage for reception in relation to exchange activities with Mainland sister schools taking place in Hong Kong¹³ (the annual total expenditure should not exceed 5% of the provision for the Sister School Grant component for the respective school year, ~~i.e. \$8,250 (for primary and secondary schools) or \$8,272 (for special schools).~~ The upper limit on such expense for DSS schools should also be calculated as 5% of the rate of the Sister School Grant component for public sector schools for the respective school year).

11. Listed below are examples on the use of the LWLSSG that are not in line with the principles:

- Organising activities that are not aligned with the learning goals, curriculum objectives or inappropriate to the stages of students’ cognitive and affective development (e.g. outdoor activities under inclement weather, field coverage on current affairs as reporters);
- Organising activities that contravene the circulars, instructions or guidelines promulgated by the EDB;
- Employing teaching staff (including supply teacher) or non-teaching staff (except for procuring services from professionals/coaches to assist in organising activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG);
- Procuring services or hiring temporary supporting staff for handling LWLSSG-related administrative work;

¹¹ The expenses on the visa for students and teachers should be indispensable for the participation in activities and be cost-effective.

~~¹² For sister school exchange activities which involve only teachers/ school management (except for preparation for sister school exchange activities at student level or participating in sister school contract signing ceremonies), schools can utilise the LWLSSG of the respective school year (bound by the provision for the Sister School Grant component of the respective school year) or the unspent balance previously retained.~~

¹³ Schools are required to avoid lavishness and make prudent decision in meeting such expenses.

- Outsourcing the overall planning and implementation work for life-wide learning and sister school exchanges to external parties;
- Subsidising students' participation in activities that primarily focus on academic performance, e.g. tutorial groups;
- Subsidising students' participation in any form of assessment and/or procuring services or materials to drill students for assessment (e.g. international examinations and assessments for schools, English language assessments offered by overseas universities);
- Subsidising teachers' participation in local or non-local training courses or professional exchange activities (except for the expenses incurred by teachers for leading students in non-local exchange activities or sister school exchanges in the Mainland, and those for sister school exchange activities at teacher level);
- Subsidising parents' participation in seminars or activities with their children (e.g. defraying fees incurred by parents for outings with their children, sister school exchange activities or non-local study tours);
- Meeting the costs of school renovation or construction works;
- Purchasing equipment or tools for handling clerical work of the school;
- Purchasing mobile computing devices, electronic equipment, computer software, etc. for general purposes;
- Meeting banquet- or courtesy-related expenses (e.g. crystal pedestal, pennant);
- Meeting the expenses for promotional and publicity activities, social events or celebrations (e.g. graduation dinners, parties);
- Meeting the expenses on food and beverage (except for the meal expenses included in the fees of outdoor education camps, training camps and non-local study tours, tour fares of sister school exchanges, expenses on food and beverage for reception in relation to exchange activities with Mainland sister schools taking place in Hong Kong, as well as expenses on breakfasts/lunches/dinners of school principals and teachers in relation to their discharge of duties in sister school activities organised in the Mainland);
- Meeting the expenses on travelling, boarding and lodging for the school personnel and students of Mainland sister schools on their visits to Hong Kong;
- Meeting the expenses on personal items and consumption; and
- Purchasing personal comprehensive and/or travel insurance for teachers and students participating in non-local study tours or sister school exchange activities organised in the

Mainland (except for the Group Comprehensive Travel Insurance Policy⁹ included in the fees for the activities under the ambit of the LWLSSG).

12. The above examples are by no means exhaustive. The SMC/IMC should prudently deploy the LWLSSG and properly allocate the resources. They should also ensure that the resources are utilised in a cost-effective manner and that every expenditure item incurred is used appropriately and falls within the ambit and complies with the principles on the use of the LWLSSG.

Points to note in conducting life-wide learning and sister school exchange activities

13. Schools should step up the prevention of and stopping school activities undertaken by any parties that are in breach of the Basic Law, the National Security Law, the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance and all laws applicable to Hong Kong. The same principle should apply to off-campus student activities arranged or approved by schools. For details, please refer to [EDB Circular No. 9/2023](#).
14. Schools should make good use of the resources to promote a change in pedagogy in different subject panels and functional groups for organising more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities that are relevant to everyday life, in line with the learning goals and curriculum objectives, connected with the KLAs and closely linked with the essential learning experiences, with a view to enhancing students' learning interest and facilitating their learning.
15. Schools should organise learning activities in line with the curriculum and in accordance with the learning goals and curriculum objectives. The activities should suit the stages of students' cognitive and affective development to cater for their development needs at different learning stages.
16. Regarding student safety when participating in extra-curricular activities, schools should observe relevant guidelines provided by the EDB, such as "*Guidelines on Outdoor Activities*", "*Guidelines on Study Tours Outside Hong Kong*" and "*Safety Guidelines on Physical Education Key Learning Area for Hong Kong Schools*"; and make reference to the guidelines and information provided by other relevant government departments (e.g. Hong Kong Observatory, Department of Health). When planning and organising activities (including those co-organised with other parties), schools should ensure that the activities are free from danger to ensure the safety of students, and that the expected learning objectives could be achieved. Please refer to the [School Activities Guidelines webpage of EDB](#) for more details.
17. When procuring services from professionals/coaches to assist in organising activities, schools should adopt the mechanism in the Sexual Conviction Record Check Scheme (the Scheme) by the Hong Kong Police Force to ensure the safety of students. Please refer to [EDB Circular No. 14/2023](#) for details. When procuring services from external organisations to assist in organising activities, schools should also request the relevant organisations to adopt the procedures under the Scheme when hiring instructors or other persons who provide educational and related services for students.

18. Since 10 July 2024, non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents may apply for the “Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Permanent Residents (Non-Chinese Citizens)” via China Travel Service Entry Permit Service Hong Kong Limited. Schools should remind students who are eligible and plan to visit the Mainland to apply early so that they may use the fast lanes at the Mainland border checkpoints without the need of arrival cards for efficient border crossing. Details are available on the related webpage (https://www.ctshk.com/mep/zh/nrep_notice_mep/).