

Education Bureau Circular No. 21/2019

Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens

[Note: This circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of Kindergartens, Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres and Schools with Kindergarten Classes Joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme – for action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information.]

Purpose

This circular informs kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes (collectively referred to as KGs hereafter) joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme of the details on the provision of ‘Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens’ (referred to as Promotion of Reading Grant hereafter) starting from the 2019/20 school year, and related measures for supporting KGs to further promote reading.

Background

2. In the 2018/19 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) implemented the ‘Pilot Scheme on the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens’ for application by KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (Scheme-KGs) which are interested in joining the pilot scheme to make use of the grant to further promote reading. Besides, through the Pilot Scheme, the EDB would be able to gain an understanding of different strategies and modes for the promotion of reading in KGs, as well as good practices for fostering children’s interest and habit in reading.

Details

3. The EDB will continue to enhance various measures to support KGs in the promotion of reading, such as organising professional development programmes for teachers, producing multi-media resources as well as strengthening collaboration with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (please refer to Annex 1 for details). In light of the effective outcomes of the Pilot Scheme mentioned above, the EDB will, starting from the 2019/20 school year, provide a recurrent Promotion of Reading Grant for all Scheme-KGs, with a view to supporting KGs to continue the promotion of reading. The amount of the grant being disbursed is determined based on the total number of students enrolled in Nursery (K1), Lower KG (K2) and Upper KG (K3) classes holding a valid “Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission”. Scheme-KGs can use the grant flexibly for the procurement of reading resources, organising school-based activities related to the

promotion of reading, or hiring of services to organise promotion of reading activities (please refer to Annex 2 for details).

Briefing Sessions

4. The EDB will organise two identical briefing sessions (Course code: CDI020200243) on 27 September 2019 and 2 October 2019 respectively to introduce to KGs the implementation details of the Promotion of Reading Grant. All Scheme-KGs are welcome to enrol. For details, please visit the website of the Training Calendar System of the EDB. The path is as follows:

EDB Webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk>) > Teachers Related > Qualifications, Training and Development > Training

Enquiry

5. For enquiries, please call the Kindergarten and Primary Section of the Curriculum Development Institute of the EDB at 2892 6111.

Sheridan LEE
(for Secretary for Education)

Measures Supporting the Promotion of Reading in Kindergartens

The EDB will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to support KGs in promoting reading. The enhanced measures to provide support for reading include:

1. Professional Development Programmes for Teachers

The EDB will continue to organise professional development programmes for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in the promotion of reading. For programme details, please refer to the booklet on ‘Professional Development Programmes for Heads and Teachers of Kindergartens (Web Version)’ accessible at the following path:

EDB Webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk>) > Curriculum Development > Resources and Support > Booklets on Professional Development Programmes

2. Strengthening Collaboration with Leisure and Cultural Services Department

The EDB will continue to organise a variety of reading activities in collaboration with the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL), and organise parent-child reading workshops in public libraries located in various districts. For instance, the EDB will continue to organise parent-child reading workshops in the public libraries located at various districts in the 2019/20 school year. Kindergarten teachers, parents or grandparents taking care of children, as well as their young children will be invited to participate in due course. We encourage KGs to make good use of the HKPL block loan service to enrich KGs’ reading resources.

3. Reading Information Website

Through the Reading Information Website, the EDB will continue to provide KGs with up-to-date news on reading activities and information. KGs are encouraged to visit the following Reading Information Website regularly for the latest information:

EDB Webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk>) > Curriculum Development > Four Key Tasks > Reading to Learn

4. Theme-based Reading and Recommended Booklists

The EDB will continue to propose reading themes and provide recommended booklists. KGs are encouraged to organise different types of school-based reading activities such as storytelling and drama to tie in with the reading themes. Schools can also solicit parents’ participation and encourage them to read with their children at home to foster children’s reading interest and help them develop a reading habit. The reading themes for KGs in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years are: (1) Chinese history and culture; (2) Healthy Living; (3) Moral Education; and (4) Nature and Living. Taking into

consideration their school contexts, KGs may encourage children to read books of other themes. For details and updated information, please refer to the following path:

EDB Webpage (<http://www.edb.gov.hk>) > Curriculum Development > Four Key Tasks > Reading to Learn > Theme-based Reading

5. Educational Television (ETV) Programmes

To arouse public interest in reading, the EDB and the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) have jointly produced a series of programmes on the promotion of reading to feature schools' good practices in the promotion of reading; sharing of experiences in fostering children's reading interest and habits by scholars and authors; and sharing of reading experiences and recommending good books by celebrities of different sectors. The series of programmes for promotion of reading includes "Lifelong Love of Reading: Sharing the Joy of Reading" and "The Lifelong Love of Reading: Good Books Recommended by Celebrities". Apart from broadcasting at RTHK31 and the EDB ETV (<https://etv.edb.gov.hk>), the series can also be viewed at the Hong Kong Education City ETV website (<https://etv.hkedcity.net>) and by means of the ETV mobile apps.

Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens

Purpose

1. To further nurture children’s reading interest and help them develop a reading habit, the EDB will disburse a ‘Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens’ to all KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (Scheme-KGs) from the 2019/20 school year onwards.

Amount and Disbursement Arrangements of the Promotion of Reading Grant

2. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the ‘Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens’ will be disbursed to all Scheme-KGs every school year, and applications from KGs are not required. The EDB will determine the amount of grant for each KG according to the total number of students holding a valid “Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission”, admitted in K1, K2 and K3 classes on 3 October¹ every year as captured in the Kindergarten Education Scheme System, and the grant will be disbursed in November. Once the tier of grant is confirmed, it will remain unchanged even if there are subsequent changes in the number of eligible students. The grant rates will be subject to annual adjustment according to the movements of the Composite Consumer Price Index.

3. In general, if a KG becomes eligible for the grant after August / September, the commencement month of a school year, the amount of grant will be determined according to its total number of students holding a valid “Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission” admitted in K1, K2 & K3 classes as at the middle of the month² in which the KG becomes eligible for the grant, and the actual amount of grant for the school year will be calculated on a pro rata basis (full-rate grant being 12 months’ provision of the grant). A Scheme-KG, regardless of the number of its registered locations under the same school registration, will be treated as one KG. The amount of the grant will be determined based on the total numbers of eligible students enrolled in all registered locations of the KG. Grant rates for the 2019/20 school year are set out as follows:

¹ If it falls on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the following school day will be taken as the basis for determining the amount of grant for a KG.

² The middle of a month refers to the 15th day of a month. If that day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the following school day will be taken as a basis for determining the amount of grant for a KG.

Tier	Approved No. of Students (Total number of students holding a valid “Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission” according to the figures on 3 October ¹ of the concerned school year)	Grant rates (\$) * (for a school year)
1	80 or below	10,000
2	81 to 300	15,000
3	above 300	20,000

* The grant rates are subject to adjustment annually in accordance with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index each year.

Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant for KGs

4. Under the principle of school-based management, KGs should, based on their actual situation, set appropriate goals and formulate strategies to optimise the use of the grant, so as to nurture children’s reading interest and help them develop a reading habit. KGs should also regularly review and evaluate whether the grant is effectively used in accordance with the set goals. When formulating a plan for the promotion of reading, KGs should discuss with their teachers how to make use of the grant to promote reading and create a good reading atmosphere, so that children will love and enjoy reading as well as enhance their reading abilities further. With the regularisation of the grant and an increase in the amount of the grant, **KGs should use the grant flexibly in addition to the procurement of books, KGs should allocate more resources as possible for organising diversified, interesting and suitable reading activities to enhance children’s reading interest effectively.** Listed below are examples on the use of the grant that are in line with its ambit:

- **Procurement of reading resources**

KGs can use the grant to procure different types of books, including Chinese and English picture books and Big Books. KGs are required to make reference to the advice of the Department of Health in ‘The Report of Advisory Group on Health Effects of Use of Internet and Electronic Screen Products (Executive Summary)’ that children should avoid prolonged use of electronic screen products. In this connection, KGs **should not** use the grant for the procurement of e-books.

- **Organising school-based activities related to the promotion of reading**

KGs can use the grant to organise interesting school-based activities to promote reading, for instance, reading award schemes, storytelling by parent volunteers to create a good reading atmosphere in the school campus, as well as to enhance children’s motivation and engagement in reading.

- **Hiring of services to organise promotion of reading activities**

KGs can also make use of the grant to hire services to organise promotion of reading activities, including hiring services from service providers such as writers and professional storytellers to conduct seminars, storytelling and parent-child reading sessions, or to commission external service providers (e.g. tertiary institutions, non-profit making organisations, academic associations and professional bodies) to provide support in organising activities related to the promotion of reading in KGs.

5. Listed below are examples on the use of the grant that are **NOT in line** with its ambit to:

- To organise activities that are irrelevant to the promotion of reading
- To purchase equipment/tools for handling clerical tasks in KGs
- To purchase computer hardware/software for purposes related to the management of books
- To purchase mobile computing devices and electronic devices, e.g. i-pen
- To purchase furniture
- To purchase e-books and pay for the registration of e-book accounts
- To employ teaching/non-teaching staff
- To purchase books for teachers or parents
- To meet banquet-related expenses
- To subsidise teachers for their participation in local or non-local professional development programmes

6. The above examples are by no means exhaustive and KGs should prudently deploy the received grant and properly allocate the resources to ensure that the expenditure incurred under each item is in line with the ambit of the grant.

Accounting and Audit Arrangements

7. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, Scheme-KGs are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all the incomes and expenditures chargeable to the grant including lists of books procured and expenses of activities. KGs are also required to record all the related incomes and expenditures in the statements / note of the annual audited accounts to reflect the incomes and expenditures of the grant, as well as to submit the annual audited accounts to the EDB in accordance with the existing requirements. Detailed reporting requirements will be set out in the circular memorandum calling for submission of annual audited accounts. Documents such as records of purchase (including invoices and receipts), quotations, employment records and documentary proof of honorarium paid to the service provider(s), etc. should be kept at schools and made available to EDB when requested. KGs are not allowed to transfer the funds/unspent balance out of the grant. No expenditure item of the grant can be included in the calculation of school fees in the fee revision exercise.

8. KGs are 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 hiring outside services and making purchases according to fair and transparent procedures in line with the ‘Guidelines on Procurement Procedures in Kindergartens’ of the Kindergarten Education Scheme of the EDB, and preparation of a separate ledger for proper recording of receipts of various accounting transactions on a reimbursement basis. KGs need to submit such records and related invoices, receipts and documents to the EDB for examination, if required. If there is a deficit, the grant can be topped up by the non-teaching staff salary portion of the basic unit subsidy under the Kindergarten Education Scheme as appropriate, having considered the overall financial position of the schools and the rationality of deployment of resources. If there is still unsettled deficit, it has to be met by schools’ own fund/non-government fund.

Reserve Ceiling and Clawback

9. KGs are required to optimise the use of the grant for the respective school year. Therefore, KGs are, in principle, not expected to retain surplus of the grant. Nevertheless, we understand that some KGs may not be able to follow the original plan to use up their funding within the year due to unforeseen circumstances in organising promotion of reading activities. We thus allow KGs to retain a reasonable amount of the unspent balance in a year and carry it forward for use in the subsequent year. We allow KGs to accumulate a surplus up to the current year provision of the grant. The EDB will claw back any amount in excess of the said cap based on KGs’ annual audited accounts. Furthermore, upon KGs’ closure, revocation or withdrawal from the Kindergarten Education Scheme in the midst of the school year, the KG must return unspent balance to the EDB.
10. KGs are required to return the amount of grant they received as specified by the EDB in full to the EDB if they are subsequently identified to have used the grant for purposes other than specified, or are no longer meeting the eligibility criteria set out in this circular.

Accountability

11. To ensure proper and effective use of the grant, KGs are required to devise a holistic school-based plan. The School Management Committees (SMCs) of the respective KGs are accountable for the proper use of the grant for its intended objectives. KGs 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 School Report for endorsement by their SMCs. KGs 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. KGs should also include the details of the activities held and the financial report in the School Report of the school year concerned for submission to and endorsement by their SMCs.

12. KGs are not required to submit the Plan and Report on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant to the EDB. However, they are encouraged to upload the School Report endorsed by their SMCs onto the homepage of the KGs for the sake of enhancing transparency. Please refer to Annexes 3 and 4 for the templates of the Plan and Report respectively on the Use of the Promotion of Reading Grant.

(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

Amount of the Grant received (\$): _____

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

	Item*	Estimated Expenses (\$)
1.	Procuring reading resources	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese books	
	<input type="checkbox"/> English books	
2.	Organising school-based activities related to the promotion of reading	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading award schemes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling by parent volunteers	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other scheme : _____	
3.	Hiring of services to organise reading promotion activities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring writers, professional storytellers, etc. to conduct seminars, storytelling and parent-child reading sessions	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire of service from external service providers to organise activities related to the promotion of reading	
	Other : _____	
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: Objective(s), strategies and effectiveness: (e.g. Review if the objective(s) is/are achieved, whether the appropriateness of the adopted strategies are appropriate, and whether any adjustment will be required based on KG's observation over the reading attitude of children, lending figures of books, degree / extent of children's engagement in reading activities, etc.)

Part 2: Financial Report

Amount of the Grant received (\$): _____

	Item*	Actual Expenses (\$)
1.	Procuring reading resources	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese books	
	<input type="checkbox"/> English books	
2.	Organising school-based activities related to the promotion of reading	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading award schemes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling by parent volunteers	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other scheme : _____	
3.	Hiring of services to organise reading promotion activities	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring writers, professional storytellers, etc. to conduct seminars, storytelling and parent-child reading sessions	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire of service from external service providers to organise student activities related to the promotion of reading	
	Other : _____	
4.	Other : _____	
		Total:
		Unspent Balance:

* Please tick the appropriate boxes or provide details.