

30 July 2020

Education Bureau Circular No. 12/2020
Kindergarten Education Scheme
Requirements of Teacher to Pupil Ratio and Teacher Qualifications

[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) Head of Sections – for information.]

Summary

This circular informs kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes joining the kindergarten (KG) education scheme (hereafter referred to as “Scheme-KGs”) that starting from the 2022/23 school year, the flexibility allowed for individual Scheme-KGs to employ a few teachers not possessing Certificate in Early Childhood Education [C(ECE)] in the early years of implementation of the new policy will cease. All Scheme-KGs are required to employ sufficient teachers possessing C(ECE) or above qualifications based on the teacher to pupil (TP) ratio of 1:11.

Details

2. The Government has implemented the Scheme from the 2017/18 school year and the overall requirement in TP ratio for Scheme-KGs has been raised from 1:15 (including the principal) to 1:11 (principal not included) so that teachers can have more capacity for catering for the diverse needs of students, development of school-based curriculum, lesson preparation, professional development activities, communication with parents, etc.

3. In principle, KGs are required to employ sufficient teachers possessing C(ECE) or above qualifications based on the TP ratio of 1:11. That notwithstanding, in the early years of implementation of the new policy, as a transitional arrangement, flexibility is allowed for KGs to employ experienced Qualified Kindergarten Teachers already serving in the sector, non-ECE degree-holders, teachers employed for creating a rich language environment in schools, etc. (all of the above teachers must be registered teacher or permitted teacher). The situation is reviewed in the 2019/20 school year to decide on the need for continuing such flexibility. Meanwhile, teachers not possessing the required qualifications should enroll for the recognised ECE courses as early as possible.

4. After the above-said transitional arrangement has come into effect, we have been closely monitoring the implementation among Scheme-KGs, and listened to the views of various stakeholders (including education bodies, associations of KGs, sponsoring bodies, principals, teachers, etc.) Having taken into account stakeholders' views and actual situation, we decide that Scheme-KGs will be required to employ sufficient teachers possessing C(ECE) or above qualifications based on the TP ratio of 1:11 starting from the 2022/23 school year. For teachers holding only non-ECE degree qualifications and being employed on top of TP ratio of 1:15 and within the ratio of 1:11, they must enroll for the recognised ECE courses¹ within two years² after they start the employment, and must acquire the qualifications within three years³ after they start the ECE courses, or else they will not be counted as teachers within the TP ratio of 1:11 in their KGs. KGs may discuss with the Education Bureau in case of special circumstances. We expect that the above arrangement can uphold professional standards of KG teachers, and at the same time, provide a chance to those who aspire to KG career but yet to acquire C(ECE) qualification to become KG teachers and pursue ECE training as early as possible.

5. Schools should pay attention to the above requirement. Schools are requested to inform their teachers not holding C(ECE) or above qualifications, if any, of the above arrangement, and encourage them to enroll for the recognised ECE courses as early as possible.

¹ List of recognised ECE courses has been uploaded to the EDB's webpage: https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/free-quality-kg-edu/approved_course_list.pdf

² The 2020/21 school year or the school year of starting employment in the currently serving school, whichever is later, is taken as a starting point for calculation. That is to say, a teacher starting his/her employment on 1 September 2020 must enroll for ECE courses on or before 31 August 2022.

³ For example, a teacher starting his/her ECE course in September 2021 must acquire the qualification by the end of August 2024.

Enquiries

6. For enquiries about this circular, please contact the Kindergarten Administration Section at 2186 8996.

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for Permanent Secretary for Education