

Education Bureau Circular No. 14/2019
Kindergarten Education Scheme
Enhanced Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students

[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.]

SUMMARY

This circular informs kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes (collectively referred to as “KGs” hereafter) joining the KG education scheme (hereafter referred to as “Scheme”) of details on the provision of the five-tiered grant according to their number of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students¹ starting from the 2019/20 school year, and pertinent measures provided by EDB to assist KGs in further enhancing their support for NCS students.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government has implemented the new KG education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year. One focus of the policy is to enhance KGs’ support for their NCS students. In this connection, the updated Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017) has enriched content on supporting NCS children in learning Chinese. Teacher training and school-based professional support have also been strengthened. All KGs admitting NCS students (regardless of the number of NCS students) may apply for taking part. Besides, KGs joining the Scheme (Scheme-KGs) admitting eight or more NCS students are provided with an additional grant comparable to the mid-point salary of the recommended salary range for a KG teacher. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, EDB sets training targets to cater for the diverse needs of students in Scheme-KGs, and provides a supply teacher grant to facilitate Scheme-KGs arranging teachers to attend the specified recognised training courses on supporting NCS students.

¹ For the planning of education support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students.

DETAILS

Grant for Support to NCS Students

Purpose

3. As announced in the 2018 Policy Address, EDB will, starting from the 2019/20 school year, provide a five-tiered grant for Scheme-KGs according to the number of NCS students admitted, so that these KGs can render more appropriate support to their NCS students, thereby assisting them in learning Chinese, fostering a diversified culture and building an inclusive environment. A KG admitting one NCS student will also receive the grant, and the grant rate for the highest tier will be a double of the current level. Details of the grant for each eligible KG are set out as follows:

Tier	Number of NCS students	Grant rate	Provisional full-year grant rate for the 2019/20 school year² (\$)
1	1 to 4	New cash grant of \$50,000 per year	50,000
2	5 to 7	New subsidy at a rate of 0.5 KG teacher	193,860
3	8 to 15	Subsidy at a rate of 1 KG teacher (i.e. the current arrangement)	387,720
4	16 to 30	Increased subsidy at a rate of 1.5 KG teachers	581,580
5	31 or above	Increased subsidy at a rate of 2 KG teachers	775,440

4. Tier-1 grant mainly facilitates KGs to purchase teaching materials to help NCS students learn Chinese, procure services (e.g. translation service), and organise activities to promote cultural integration and parent education, etc. The grant rate will be subject to annual adjustment according to the movements of the Composite Consumer Price Index. Tier-2 to Tier-5 grants are generally meant for employing additional teachers. Like other salary-related subsidies for teaching staff, the grant rates will be adjusted on a school year basis according to the annual civil service pay adjustment. A circular memorandum will be issued by EDB every year to announce the adjusted grant rates.

² For the 2019/20 school year, the grant rate for Tier 1 is set at \$50,000. The grant rates for Tiers 2 to 5 are provisional figures adjusted according to the movements of the Composite Consumer Price Index and are for reference only. The final grant rates will be announced upon confirmation of the civil service pay adjustment.

Eligibility

5. A Scheme-KG having admitted eligible NCS students³ for its nursery (K1), lower KG (K2) or upper KG (K3) classes adopting the local curriculum will be eligible for the grant for support to NCS students. Application for the grant is not required. For the purpose of this grant, a Scheme-KG, regardless of the number of its registered locations under the same school registration, will be counted as one KG.

Usage

6. KGs are required to use the grant solely to enhance support to their NCS students. The grant may be used for appointing additional staff or procuring services to provide teachers with more manpower support and professional training to develop effective strategies to help NCS students learn Chinese and raise teachers' cultural sensitivity so that they would be more sensitive in understanding their culture and religion when teaching NCS students. Communication with parents of NCS students may also be enhanced. For example, KGs may use the grant to:

- employ additional teaching staff on a full-time or part-time basis as appropriate to implement different modes of learning activities for NCS students;
- employ teaching assistants to assist teachers in designing learning activities and teaching materials to facilitate implementation of different modes of learning activities for NCS students;
- solicit support from other professionals through hire of professional services, including collaboration with non-governmental organisations, to implement diversified modes of activities to create an inclusive learning environment in KGs, and encourage NCS students and local students to learn and grow together to facilitate NCS students' integration into school life and mastery of the Chinese language through peer support;
- employ ethnic minority assistants or procure translation services as appropriate to strengthen communication with parents of NCS students, including translation of school circulars, explanation of school policies and administrative arrangements to parents of NCS students, etc.;
- arrange professional development for teachers to enhance their awareness and capability in supporting NCS students and adopt the Whole School Approach to render appropriate services; and
- broaden NCS students' social experience to facilitate their integration into society, etc.

7. Having regard to school context, KGs may utilise the additional resources in diversified ways to support NCS students. KGs with more NCS students should step up efforts

³ Eligible NCS students are NCS students who hold a valid certificate (i.e. a "Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission" or a "Certificate of Eligibility for the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme" issued by the education authority which remains valid throughout the Scheme Validity Period) and meet the eligibility requirements for basic unit subsidy in the specified months taken into account during the calculation of the two instalments of the grant for the KGs concerned.

to create a rich Chinese language environment, and like other KGs, they should adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction in most of their lessons to enable NCS students' immersion in a Chinese language environment as far as possible. Besides, to ensure proper and effective use of the grant to enhance support to NCS students, KGs in receipt of the grant are required to devise a holistic school-based plan. In this connection, these Scheme-KGs are required to submit to EDB a school plan on the utilisation of the grant and planned support measures at the beginning of a school year, as well as a school report at the end of the school year summarising the implementation and evaluation of these measures which will serve as reference for planning the support measures for the following school year. Templates for school plans and school reports will be provided by EDB and uploaded onto the KG Education Scheme System (System) for KGs' deployment.

Disbursement arrangements

8. The grant for support to NCS students will be disbursed in two instalments, with the first instalment disbursed in August or September (to tie in with the commencement month of a school year of individual Scheme-KGs) and the second instalment in April of the following year. The grant rates for the two instalments are calculated based on the respective tier of grant the KG is entitled to in the specified months of the school year. Details are as follows:

- (i) Tiered grant for the first instalment: For all KGs (irrespective of the commencement month of a school year), the tier is determined according to the number of eligible NCS students admitted as at the specified date in mid-September (i.e. the reference date of the Student Enrolment Survey for the respective school year).
- (ii) Tiered grant for the second instalment: The tier is determined according to the number of eligible NCS students admitted in mid-April⁴. If the tier for the two instalments varies, the grant rate for the higher tier will be taken for the second instalment. The second instalment of the grant will not be disbursed to a KG if the number of NCS students drops to zero in April.

9. To facilitate KGs' planning for and steady delivery of support measures, for the disbursement of the two instalments of the grant, once the tier of grant for a particular instalment is confirmed, it will remain unchanged even if there are subsequent changes in the number of NCS students in the period covered by that instalment. Besides, if a KG becomes eligible for the grant in October or thereafter, the tier of grant will be determined according to its number of NCS students admitted as at the middle of that month, and the grant rate will be calculated on a pro rata basis starting from the eligible month (full-rate grant being 12 months' provision of the grant).

10. All KGs are required to support the NCS students admitted and submit information on the eligible NCS students to EDB for calculation of the grant rate. In this connection, KGs should report the estimated number of eligible NCS students in September of the new school

⁴ Generally speaking, 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 working day will be taken as a basis for determining the tier of grant for a KG.

year via the System in June every year. EDB will, on the basis of the information collected, calculate the provisional grant rate for the first instalment and disburse the grant to KGs in the commencement month of the school year. Besides, upon the start of the school year, EDB will verify the number of eligible NCS students as at the specified date in mid-September and adjust the grant rate or require KGs to return any overpayment of grant as appropriate. As such, after the commencement of the school year, KGs are required to provide further information, including the spoken language at home and ethnicity of the NCS students admitted, etc., via the System. They are also required to provide additional information for special cases, such as the reasons for Chinese students by ethnicity but not speaking Chinese at home. As regards the grant rate for the second instalment, EDB will calculate the provisional grant rate according to the number of eligible NCS students in early March as captured in the System, and disburse the grant in April. Similar to the disbursement arrangement for the first instalment, EDB will adjust the grant rate or require KGs to return any overpayment of grant as appropriate according to the verified number of eligible NCS students as at the specified date in mid-April. Please refer to Appendix 1 on the flow of the disbursement arrangements for the grant.

Reserve ceiling and clawback

11. Scheme-KGs are encouraged to optimise the use of the grant to cater for the needs of the students. They may also need to retain some surplus to meet contingencies and needs for adjustments in the strategies in manpower deployment and support to students. Hence, Scheme-KGs are allowed to accumulate a surplus up to the current year provision of the grant. Should there be any excessive surplus, EDB will claw back the surplus of the grant based on the annual audited accounts.

Accounting arrangements

12. Scheme-KGs should be prudent in the use of government subsidy and ensure that the grant is used according to its ambit, and that the expenditure incurred is reasonable and necessary. For accounting and auditing purposes, Scheme-KGs are required to maintain a separate ledger account to record all the income and expenditure chargeable to the grant. KGs should report the income, expenditure and surplus / deficit of the grant, as well as the related assets and liabilities in their annual audited accounts. 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 / tenders, employment records and documentary proof of salaries paid, the KG's contributions to provident fund, etc. should be kept at schools and made available to EDB when requested. As a usual practice, relevant records of the grant should be kept for a period of not less than seven years.

13. In using the grant, Scheme-KGs are required to put in place proper procedures for employment and procurement of goods / services that are in line with the prevailing ordinances, regulations and guidelines issued by EDB. Scheme-KGs may supplement these with additional school-based procedures having regard to their individual circumstances as necessary. They should also ensure that the procedures are conducted in a fair, just, open and well-documented manner.

14. Scheme-KGs should avoid deficit in using the grant. Should there be any deficit, the amount should be borne by the portion of the basic unit subsidy other than teaching staff salary and related expenses (i.e. 40% of the basic half-day unit subsidy and additional subsidy for whole-day and long whole-day services) and/or school funds, as appropriate.

15. Scheme-KGs are required to return the amount of grant they received as specified by EDB in full to the Government if they are subsequently identified for using the grant for purposes other than those specified and/or no longer meeting the eligibility criteria for the grant set out in this circular. Scheme-KGs should inform EDB in writing in advance when there are any changes in their operation which make them no longer eligible for the grant, and EDB reserves the right to withhold the payment of the grant, deduct the overpayment from other grants payable to the KGs, and/or demand immediate repayment.

Other Support Measures

Curriculum guide and school-based support services

16. EDB is committed to helping NCS students integrate into society and adapt to the local education system early. On top of the provision of additional grant for eligible KGs mentioned above, EDB has introduced other measures to help KGs enhance support for NCS students. On curriculum, a section on Chinese learning for NCS children has been added to the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide updated in 2017. Suggestions are provided on how KGs should support NCS children. In addition, EDB provides diversified modes of school-based support services to KGs, including services to enhance teachers' professional capacity for helping NCS students learn Chinese. A circular memorandum on school-based support services is issued by EDB in March/April every year, inviting KGs to apply for appropriate support services in light of their stage of development and the learning needs of students.

Training for teachers

17. Under the new policy, EDB has strengthened support for NCS students through various measures. Relevant training for teachers is essential to optimise the benefits of these support measures. Hence, at the level of school development and needs, we have set targets for teacher training, i.e. a Scheme-KG admitting eight or more NCS students should have at least one teacher having attended the basic course as recognised by EDB by the 2018/19 school year, and all Scheme-KGs having admitted NCS students (regardless of the number) should satisfy this requirement by the 2020/21 school year. Recognised courses include publicly-funded courses or courses with active involvement of EDB. A list of recognised courses has been uploaded onto the EDB website. Since the 2017/18 school year, EDB has commissioned tertiary institutions to offer "specified recognised courses" on supporting NCS students. Teachers may, through the [Training Calendar System](#) on the EDB website, obtain the latest information and submit applications online. Moreover, starting from the 2018/19 school year, a supply teacher grant is provided for Scheme-KGs to facilitate the release of teachers to attend the above "specified recognised courses". Details are set out in EDB Circular No. 8/2018.

18. Under the Scheme, the overall teacher to pupil ratio has been enhanced to 1:11, so as to allow KG teachers to have more room for various professional activities (such as professional collaboration and development, communication with parents, and catering for the diverse needs of children). To strengthen KG teachers' understanding of the developmental needs of children and to help them cater for learner diversity (including those of NCS students), EDB has devised a teacher professional development framework and provided KG teachers with structured in-service training, including basic and advanced courses.

19. Since the 2017/18 school year, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) has invited post-secondary or tertiary institutions to develop and organise professional development programmes on the Chinese and English languages for KG teachers, and made use of the Language Fund to fully subsidise KG teachers' participation in these programmes. The programmes on the Chinese language cover the topic of learner diversity, including the strategies to teach NCS students Chinese. With the support of the Language Fund, SCOLAR also collaborates with non-governmental organisations on launching district-based programmes, thereby further motivating NCS students to learn Chinese through such activities as visits, games and creative arts.

Admission arrangements of KGs

20. Equal opportunities for admission must be provided by KGs for all children (regardless of their race, gender and ability), including handling the applications from NCS children properly with due regard to the differences in their culture and customs from local practices. KGs must also be careful about the details of admission arrangements on whether they may involve direct or indirect discrimination; when answering enquiries from parents, teachers and staff in general should offer assistance as appropriate and avoid misunderstanding. KGs must provide both Chinese and English versions of the application form and relevant information. To facilitate parents of NCS children in obtaining the relevant information, KGs should create an icon or provide a simple message in English on the home page of the school website prominently to let parents know instantly how to obtain the English version of the information when browsing the home page of the school website. At the same time, KGs should provide the link to the English version of the EDB's website on admission arrangements for K1 classes in KGs (http://www.edb.gov.hk/k1-admission_e) on the school website prominently (e.g. home page of the school website / the webpage providing the admission information in English) to facilitate browsing by parents. KGs have to put in place effective means of communication and offer assistance to NCS children and their parents as far as practicable. When interviewing NCS children, KGs should arrange interpretation and/or translation service for the applicants where necessary or allow parents and their children to be accompanied by a Chinese-speaking relative/friend to facilitate communication.

21. To encourage parents of NCS children to send their children to local KGs to facilitate their learning of Chinese language as early as possible, EDB organises seminars on K1 admission for parents of NCS children annually (interpretation service is provided as appropriate). Relevant materials published by EDB, such as leaflets, posters and application forms and guidance notes on "Application for Registration Certificate for KG Admission" have

been translated into seven major ethnic minority languages. The KG Profile has been published in both Chinese and English to provide information on every KG, thus serving as a useful reference for parents in making school choices. Starting from 2018, a new column “Support to NCS Students” has been included in the KG Profile for KGs to set out the support provided for their NCS students. Starting from September 2018, EDB has set up a hotline (telephone number: 2892 6676) for NCS parents to facilitate NCS parents’ enquiries about admission to KGs. Should individual NCS children encounter genuine difficulties in applying for admission, parents may request EDB for appropriate arrangement. EDB will, where appropriate, make referrals for them to Scheme-KGs with vacancies.

22. Parents of NCS children are encouraged to send their children to KGs with an immersed Chinese language environment as early as possible to facilitate their learning of the Chinese language. In this connection, the Government has put in place a series of support measures for NCS children in KGs. The leaflet “Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Children” has been updated to introduce the relevant measures. The above-mentioned leaflet will be distributed to KGs later for reference and distribution to parents of NCS children, and it can be downloaded from the EDB’s website (Path: Education System and Policy > Kindergarten Education > Admission Arrangements for Nursery (K1) Classes in Kindergartens > 12. Related Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Children).

Communication with parents of NCS students

23. EDB endeavours to support KGs in creating an inclusive learning environment. To facilitate KGs’ communication with parents of NCS students, a set of communication cue cards with audio files on useful phrases in greeting, showing appreciation, care and concern, etc. has been produced in eight languages (Chinese, English and six major ethnic minority languages⁵). These cue cards have been distributed to KGs and uploaded onto the EDB website to help teachers foster a caring atmosphere in daily contacts with parents of NCS students. A set of templates for common school circulars has also been translated into major ethnic minority languages to facilitate KGs’ communication with parents of NCS students. Moreover, the electronic version of the pamphlet entitled “Knowing More About Children’s Learning” is available in nine languages (Chinese, English and seven major ethnic minority languages) to familiarise parents with the goals and characteristics of the KG curriculum and promote home-school cooperation.

BRIEFING SESSIONS

24. To enable KGs to have a better understanding about the tiered grant for support to NCS students and EDB’s relevant support measures on supporting NCS student in KGs, we have included the relevant topics in the briefing sessions on subsidy disbursement arrangements in late June and early July this year. We have reserved two seats for each KG (including one for KG principal or teacher). Details of the briefing sessions are at Appendix 2.

⁵ Cue cards and audio files in the seventh ethnic minority language, i.e. Punjabi (Indian), will be uploaded onto the EDB website in due course.

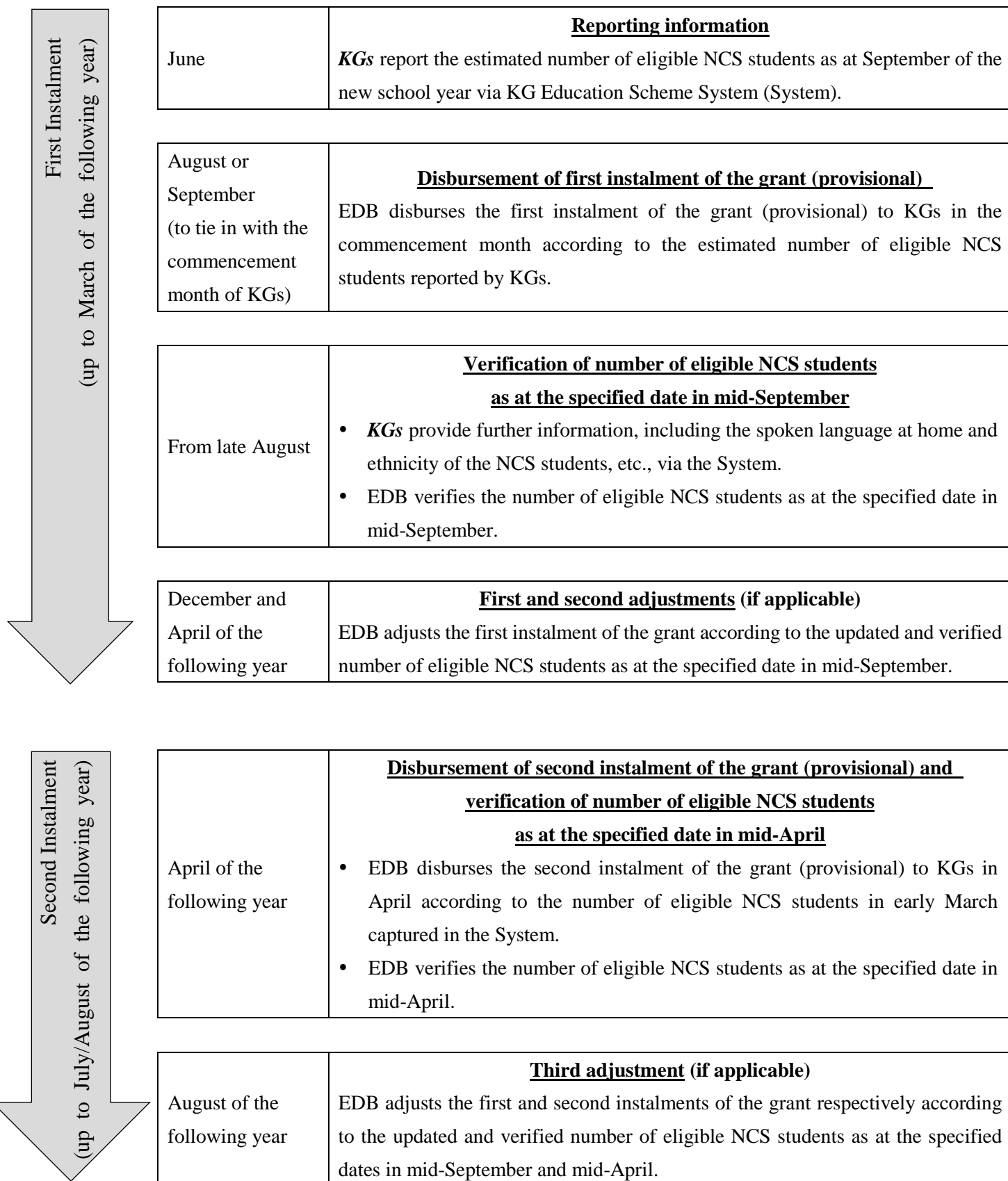
ENQUIRIES

25. For school-specific enquiries, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officer/Senior Services Officer. For enquiries concerning this circular, please contact EDB as follows:

Grant for support to NCS students	2892 6378 / 2892 6411
Teacher training on supporting NCS students	3540 6869
KG admission arrangements	3540 6808

Ms Y Y SO
for Permanent Secretary for Education

**Disbursement Arrangements for Grant for Support to NCS Students
Flowchart**



Briefing Sessions on the Arrangements for Disbursement of Unit Subsidy and Grant for Support to Non-Chinese Speaking Students and Reimbursement of Staff Relief Grant for Staff Taking Paid Maternity Leave under the Kindergarten Education Scheme for the 2019/20 School Year

The schedule of the briefing sessions is as follows:

Region	Date	Time	Venue
Hong Kong Island	24 June 2019 (Monday)	9:30 - 12:00 noon	Lecture Theatre, 4/F, West Block, Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon (No parking facilities are available at the venue)
New Territories East	24 June 2019 (Monday)	2:30 - 5:00 pm	
Kowloon	25 June 2019 (Tuesday)	9:30 - 12:00 noon	
New Territories West	3 July 2019 (Wednesday)	2:30 - 5:00 pm	

The rundown of the briefing sessions is as follows:

Time	Content	Speaker
9:30 - 9:40 am / 2:30 - 2:40 pm	Registration	---
9:40 - 10:10 am / 2:40 - 3:10 pm	Arrangements for disbursement of unit subsidy	Representatives from Education Bureau
10:10 - 10:40 am / 3:10 - 3:40 pm	Arrangements for disbursement of grant for support to NCS students and submission of relevant school plan	
10:40 - 11:10 am / 3:40 - 4:10 pm	Using the “Common Log-on System” under the “KG Education Scheme System” to report information	
11:10 - 11:40 am / 4:10 - 4:40 pm	Arrangements for reimbursement of staff relief grant for staff taking paid maternity leave	
11:40 - 12:00 noon / 4:40 - 5:00 pm	Q&As	

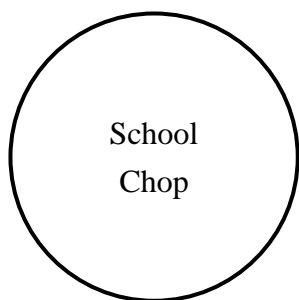
1. EDB has reserved seats for all KGs and **no prior registration is required**. **One to two representative(s)** (should include principal or teacher) of each KG is/are invited to attend the briefing session under its respective region as set out above. **KG representatives are required to complete the form on the next page and present it to EDB staff at the entrance of the venue for seating arrangement.**
2. Briefing sessions will be conducted in **Cantonese**.
3. If Tropical Cyclone Signal No. 8 or above or black rainstorm warning signal is issued on the specified date, the briefing session will be cancelled. However, if Tropical Cyclone Signal No. 8 or above or black rainstorm warning signal is cancelled two hours before the start of the briefing session, the briefing session will be conducted as scheduled.

Briefing Sessions on the Arrangements for Disbursement of Unit Subsidy and Grant for Support to Non-Chinese Speaking Students and Reimbursement of Staff Relief Grant for Staff Taking Paid Maternity Leave under the Kindergarten Education Scheme for the 2019/20 School Year

Participant list

Principal/Teacher/Representative: _____

Accounting Staff/Administrative Assistant/Representative: _____



Signature of Principal: _____

Name of Principal (in English): _____

Name of Principal (in Chinese): _____

Name of Kindergarten: _____

Date: _____