

Guidelines on Kindergarten Admission Arrangements for the 2018/19 School Year

Summary

The kindergartens (KGs) joining/intending to join the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme (hereafter referred to as “Scheme”) should read carefully the Education Bureau Circular Memorandum (EDBCM) No.107/2017, and comply with the admission guidelines issued by EDB. The Guidelines on KG Admission Arrangements for the 2018/19 school year (hereafter referred to as “Guidelines”) aim to further explain the details to KGs, KG-cum-Child Care Centres and schools with KG classes (hereafter collectively referred to as “KGs”). Heads of KGs should ensure that the guidelines are circulated to all teachers and staff concerned for action.

Details

Background

1. The Government will implement the free quality KG education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year to enhance the quality of education in various aspects through different measures. Under the new policy, the Government will provide eligible local non-profit-making KGs with a basic subsidy for a three-year quality half-day (HD) service for all eligible students. To unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, additional resources will be provided for eligible KGs offering whole-day (WD) and long WD (LWD) services to encourage them to offer such services at a more affordable rate.
2. Under the Scheme, to maintain the flexibility and diversity of the KG sector and free choice for parents, KG student admission will remain a school-based matter. As for admission arrangements for K1 classes in KGs in the 2018/19 school year, EDB will continue to implement the admission arrangements for K1 classes in KGs (hereafter referred to as “2018/19 K1 Admission Arrangements”). Premised on the accumulated experience, the “2018/19 K1 admission arrangements” will be fine-tuned as appropriate to tie in with the implementation of the Scheme.
3. Besides, EDB will encourage local KGs not joining the Scheme to participate in the “2018/19 K1 Admission Arrangements” so that more KGs and parents could benefit from the admission arrangements. In this regard, EDB will separately invite KGs concerned to join the “2018/19 K1 Admission Arrangements”. The participating KG list will be uploaded to EDB’s website in end-July 2017 for parents’ reference.

4. For details on the “2018/19 K1 Admission Arrangements”, please refer to EDBCM No.107/2017 and other related circulars for arrangements and requirements on admission, including the arrangement that KGs should continue to admit students with different backgrounds and needs if there are vacancies.

Distribution of Application Forms for Admission

5. All KGs joining the “2018/19 K1 Admission Arrangements” should set up a school webpage and inform parents in advance the arrangements for obtaining and submitting admission applications, including the dates for distribution and submission of application forms, application procedures and fee (if applicable), etc. through their webpage and other effective channels (e.g. guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, etc.). Relevant information announced by KGs and the application forms should be in both Chinese and English. Please refer to Appendix for the basic information required.

6. KGs should not start the recruitment procedure which involves K1 applicants (e.g. interviewing the children applicants) for the next school year earlier than November each year.

7. Irrespective of the means of distributing application forms, KGs should not limit the number of forms to be distributed or indicate on the application forms any wording such as “first-come-first-served” and/or “application will not be accepted once quota is exhausted” to avoid parents queuing up for a long time for application forms. Similarly, when parents submit application forms, KGs should not set a quota or indicate any wording such as “first-come-first-served” and/or “application will not be accepted once quota is exhausted”.

8. Under the premise of not setting a limit to the number of application forms to be distributed, KGs can set a period of time for parents to obtain and submit application forms. The period set should be reasonable (including ample time and Saturday(s)) so as to allow sufficient time for parents to follow up. If necessary, KGs can process applications flexibly (e.g. extending the period of distributing and collecting application forms). KGs should confirm the receipt of applications in a school-based manner.

School-based Admission Mechanism

9. KGs are required to introduce a school-based admission mechanism, which should include the admission procedure and criteria, and the number of candidates to be interviewed, etc.

10. The school-based admission mechanism should be fair, just and open and KGs should ensure the admission requirements are in compliance with the existing Hong Kong legislation and legislation on equal opportunities (including Sex Discrimination Ordinance, Disability Discrimination Ordinance, Family Status Discrimination Ordinance and Race Discrimination Ordinance). KGs should also comply with Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and/or Prevention of Bribery Ordinance when handling matters related to student admission, as and when necessary.

11. In general, KGs will formulate their school-based admission criteria by taking into consideration different factors, such as education professionalism, home-school cooperation, student interests and child care, etc. For WD/LWD services, KGs are provided with additional resources by the Government. To unleash the potential of the local labour force under the population policy, KGs, when considering applications for WD/LWD services, should give due priority to families in need (such as those with working parents) and those having genuine need for WD/LWD services due to their special circumstances such as taking care of one or more persons with a disability at home. Relevant conditions should be included in the admission criteria announced by the KGs.

12. With regard to age of admission to K1 classes, ideally, children should attain the age of three before they are sent for school education as children of that age are physically and intellectually ready for KG education. But in view of the general request for dovetailing the admission age for KGs and primary schools, the admission age for KGs as at September was relaxed to 2 years 8 months starting from the 2001/02 school year. Under this principle, KGs can admit children of that age according to their own school-based admission mechanism. Please refer to EDBC No. 43/2000 for details.

13. Equal opportunities for admission to KGs should be provided by KGs for all children (regardless of their race, gender and ability) including the handling of admission applications from non-Chinese speaking (NCS) parents and students properly with a view to the difference in culture and customs from local practice. KGs should provide NCS parents with the English version of application form and admission guidelines. If necessary, interpretation and/or translation service may be arranged for applicants, e.g. making good use of the interpretation and/or translation service into major ethnic minority languages provided by the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER) funded by the Home Affairs Department. Alternatively, KGs may allow parents to be accompanied by a Chinese speaking relative/friend during interview so as to facilitate communication.

14. If interviews are required as a part of the admission procedures, KGs have to respect the pattern of children’s development and KGs should not require children to answer questions or do tasks that are intellectually, physically and emotionally beyond their age. Should KGs choose not to interview all students, they need to specify the selection criteria for interview in advance.

15. All staff who are involved in the selection of applicants are required to declare conflict of interests (e.g. has kinship with an applicant). All documents should be recorded properly. Schools should consider assigning another staff for interview if a staff has declared a conflict of interest.

16. Admission criteria, particulars of applicants (e.g. application forms and identity documents, etc.) and interview records (e.g. assessment and selection results, etc.), etc. should be properly kept for records. Besides, KGs should put in place an effective means of communication and provide assistance to parents and students as far as possible. KGs should also provide timely response to parents’ enquiries about admission arrangements and handle related complaints.

“Not More Than One Place for Each Child” Measure

17. Under the Scheme, parents are required to use a valid registration document for K1 registration in the 2018/19 school year. EDB will issue a registration document to each student who can receive education in Hong Kong, students who are eligible for receiving subsidy under the Scheme will be issued a “Registration Certificate for KG Admission” (hereafter referred to as “RC”); if a student is not eligible for receiving subsidy under the Scheme¹, a “Kindergarten Admission Pass” (hereafter referred to as “AP”) will be issued for registration and admission to a Scheme-KG but the parents concerned are required to pay full school fees before deduction of subsidy under the Scheme as shown on the Fees Certificate of the KG to which the child is admitted.

18. KGs are advised to remind parents through their school webpage and other effective channels (e.g. guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, etc.) of timely applications for the “RC” from September to November 2017 and provide links to relevant EDB websites.

19. Under special circumstances, if a student cannot present one of the valid formal registration documents (for example, a student has been issued an “RC” and attending a

¹ Upon obtaining permission from the Director of Immigration, non-local children (such as children holding a form of recognizance, children whose parent(s) is/are holding a student visa, etc.) can receive education in Hong Kong but they are not eligible for subsidy under the Scheme.

K1 class in a Scheme-KG in the 2017/18 school year, the “RC” of the student concerned would be kept by the attending KG, if there are special circumstances that parents wish to apply for admission to a K1 class in the 2018/19 school year again (including repeating in the same KG)), parents of the student concerned have to apply for a “Provisional Registration Letter” for provisional K1 registration for the 2018/19 school year. If “Provisional Registration Letter” is adopted in the registration procedure, on or before the first day of officially attending the KG concerned, parents have to submit a valid formal registration document (i.e. “RC” or “AP”) of their child to that KG, only then that KG can admit the student concerned. Details on application for the “Provisional Registration Letter” will be announced in end-October 2017.

20. KGs should not require parents to complete the registration procedure or pay the registration fee in any forms before the “centralised registration dates”.

21. KGs should ensure that there are enough school places before issuing the offer letters to children. Any offer of school places should not adopt the mechanism of “first-come-first-served” or “with set quota” so as to avoid parents queuing up or any misunderstanding.

22. After the “centralised registration dates”, KGs may fill the vacant places by calling the waiting list or those who have not yet secured a place. In case KGs admit a child after the “centralised registration dates”, the parents should complete the registration procedure according to a date set by individual KGs, but parents are still required to complete the registration by tendering a valid registration document to the KG concerned. After registration, if parents would like to enroll their children in another Scheme-KG but do not intend to give up the registered KG place, hence, unable to tender the registration document to the other KG, even if they are willing to pay school fees, the other KG concerned cannot complete K1 registration for their children. In order to fully implement the measure, principles of the above arrangement are also applicable to K2 and K3. In short, premised on the principle that each student should only attend one KG, and for enabling students to have equal opportunities for receiving subsidized KG education as well as making good use of Government resources, regardless of the level, all Scheme-KGs can only admit students with a valid registration document.

23. Should parents wish to change to another KG after registering with a KG, they should obtain the registration document from the KG that they have already registered with. The KGs should return the registration document and once the parents obtain the registration document, the KG concerned will no longer keep the school place for that student. Normally, registration fee once paid will not be refunded.

Application Fee and Registration Fee

24. According to regulation 61(1) of the Education Regulations, KGs must first obtain the written approval of the Permanent Secretary for Education before collections of or adjustments to application fee and registration fee are made. Under the free quality KG education policy, the approved ceilings of application fee and registration fee that KGs joining / intending to join the Scheme are allowed to collect from the students admitted to K1 in the 2018/19 school year are as follows:

- (i) Application fee (\$40)
- (ii) Registration fee
 - \$970 for HD session
 - \$1,570 for WD session

25. Schools cannot collect fees exceeding the approved ceilings.

Information on Vacancies

26. EDB will collect information from KGs on K1 vacancies about a week after the “centralised registration dates” through an electronic platform, and publish a list of KGs in various districts in end-January 2018 so as to help parents find a K1 place for their children. EDB will organise briefings on computer data input before the “centralised registration dates” for KGs.

27. Under the free quality KG education policy, student admission in principle will continue to be at the discretion of individual KGs and KGs should comply with the requirements as stipulated in paragraphs 5 to 7 of EDBCM No.107/2017. Under special circumstances, if Scheme-KGs still have vacancies and individual students (including those at risk of developmental delay and NCS students) encounter difficulties in applying for admission, Regional Education Offices and Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres will make referrals as appropriate.

Arrangements of Admission to K2 or K3 in the 2018/19 School Year

28. After the implementation of the Scheme in the 2017/18 school year, holders of the “Certificate of Eligibility the Pre-primary Education Scheme” (hereafter referred to as “voucher”) concerned will be automatically covered under the new funding mode of the Scheme during the validity period of their “voucher”. For those students who will study K2 or K3, and have been issued a “voucher” before, their parents concerned do not need to apply for the “RC” for registration purpose but to follow school-based arrangements for registration. Parents should pay the tuition fee according to the Fees

Certificate of the KG. If the KG concerned does not collect tuition fee, relevant information will also be shown on the Fees Certificate.

29. For students who have not been issued a “voucher” before, but will study K2 or K3 in the 2018/19 school year, their parents are required to apply for the “RC” for registration and follow school-based arrangements for registration.

Education Bureau

June 2017

List of basic Information on School-based Admission Arrangements
(Relevant information should be provided in both Chinese and English)

KGs are required to upload the information below to school webpage and/or via different channels to inform parents in advance on or before 21 September 2017 (Thursday).

(1) Information on Admission Application

- Ways to distribute application forms
- Date and period for distribution of application forms
- Application procedure
- Application fee (if applicable)
- Ways to submit application forms
- Date and time for submission of application forms

(2) School-based Admission Mechanism

- Number of candidates to be interviewed
- Interview format and arrangements
- Admission criteria

(3) Registration Procedure

- Arrangements on announcement of admission results
- “Centralised Registration Dates”
- Arrangements on submission of a valid registration document and registration fee (including the amount)
- Arrangements on registration for students on waiting list
- Arrangements for students changing school after registration