

Guidelines on Kindergarten Admission Arrangements for the 2019/20 School Year

Summary

The government has implemented the kindergarten (KG) education scheme (hereafter referred to as “Scheme”) starting from the 2017/18 school year. The KGs joining/intending to join the Scheme should read carefully the Education Bureau Circular Memorandum (EDBCM) No. 87/2018, and comply with the admission guidelines issued by the Education Bureau (EDB). The Guidelines on KG Admission Arrangements for the 2019/20 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. 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 2019/20 school year, EDB will continue to implement the admission arrangements for K1 classes in KGs (hereafter referred to as “2019/20 K1 Admission Arrangements”).
2. EDB encourages local KGs not joining the Scheme to participate in the “2019/20 K1 Admission Arrangements” so that more KGs and parents could benefit from the admission arrangements. In this regard, EDB will separately invite the KGs concerned. The list of KGs not joining the Scheme but participating in “2019/20 K1 Admission Arrangements” will be uploaded to EDB’s website by mid-July 2018 for parents’ reference.
3. EDB takes this opportunity to remind KGs to ensure equal opportunities in admission for all children regardless of their race, gender and ability. Their school-based admission mechanism must be fair, just and open, and in compliance with the anti-discrimination ordinances (including the Race Discrimination Ordinance). In this connection, KGs must 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.

Distribution of Application Forms for Admission

4. All KGs joining the “2019/20 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/or other effective channels (e.g. guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, etc.). Relevant information announced by KGs and the application forms must be in both Chinese and English. Please refer to **Appendix** for the basic information required. EDB encourages KGs to upload the application form and other relevant information onto the school webpage to facilitate parents in browsing and downloading. To facilitate parents of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children in obtaining the relevant information, KGs should create an icon or provide a simple message in English on the school webpage (e.g. “If you need English version of the information, please call xxxx xxxx to contact Ms/Mr XXX of our school”), to let parents know how to obtain the English version of the information.

5. 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”.
6. 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

7. KGs are required to put in place a school-based admission mechanism, which should include the admission procedure and criteria, and the number of candidates to be interviewed, etc. KGs should continue to admit children with different backgrounds and needs if there are vacancies.
8. The school-based admission mechanism must be fair, just and open and KGs must ensure that 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.
9. In general, KGs 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, when considering applications for WD/LWD services, KGs 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 families which need to take care of persons with disability. Such relevant information should be included in the admission criteria announced by the KGs.

10. 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. 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.
11. Equal opportunities for admission to KGs 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 difference in their culture and customs from local practices. To facilitate parents of NCS children in enquiring about school-based admission mechanism, KGs can consider providing the contact number of a designated staff. At the same time, KGs should ensure that all staff involved in the admission procedures have a clear understanding of the measures in catering for NCS children and their parents, and implement such measures properly, e.g. providing parents of NCS children with the English version of application form and admission guidelines. In this regard, the Equal Opportunities Commission has published an “Easy Guide on Promoting Racial Equality in Schools Kindergarten Admission (Applicable to Kindergartens with Local Curriculum)”. For details, please refer to:

http://www.eoc.org.hk/EOC/GraphicsFolder/inforcenter/rise/leaflet_output_for_web_2pages.pdf

Interview Arrangements

12. KGs should not start the recruitment procedure for K1 applicants (e.g. interviewing the children applicants) for the next school year earlier than November each year.
13. 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 children, they must specify the selection criteria for interview in advance.
14. When interviewing NCS children, KGs should arrange interpretation and/or translation service for applicants where necessary, e.g. making good use of the interpretation and/or translation service provided by the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER) funded by the Home Affairs Department. Alternatively, KGs may allow parents and children to be

accompanied by a Chinese speaking relative/friend during interview so as to facilitate communication.

15. All staff involved in the selection of applicants are required to declare conflict of interests (e.g. has kinship with an applicant). All documents must 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 the applicants (e.g. their 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 NCS children and their parents 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 2019/20 school year. EDB will issue a registration document to each student who can receive education in Hong Kong. Students 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 to a Scheme-KG but the parents concerned are required to pay full school fees (i.e. before deduction of subsidy under the Scheme) as shown on the Fees Certificate of the KG admitting the child.
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 2018 and provide parents links for their access to relevant EDB websites.
19. Under special circumstances, if a student cannot present one of the valid formal registration documents, parents of the student concerned have to apply for a “Provisional Registration Letter” for provisional K1 registration for the 2019/20 school year. (For example, a student with an “RC” and admitted to a K1 class in a Scheme-KG in the 2018/19 school year, his/her “RC” would be kept by the attending KG. If there are special circumstances that parents wish to apply for admission to a K1 class again in the 2019/20 school year (e.g. repeating in the same KG), they have to apply for “Provisional Registration Letter”.) If “Provisional Registration Letter” is used in the registration, parents have to submit a valid formal registration document (i.e. “RC” or “AP”) to that KG on or

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.

before the first day of formally attending the KG. Details on application for the “Provisional Registration Letter” will be announced in end-October 2018.

20. KGs should not require parents to complete the registration procedure, pay the registration fee or other fees (e.g. for purchasing school uniforms, tea and snacks, etc.) 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 be based on “first-come-first-served” or “with set quota” to avoid parents queuing up or having any misunderstanding.
22. After the “centralised registration dates”, KGs may fill the vacancies by admitting children on the waiting list or those who have not yet secured a place. If KGs admit children 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 submitting a valid registration document to the KG. 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, they will be unable to submit the registration document to another KG. Even if they are willing to pay full school fees, the KG concerned cannot admit their child. To fully implement this 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 children with a valid registration document.
23. Should parents wish to change to another KG after registration, they should get back the registration document from the KG that they have registered with. The KGs should return the registration document to the parents as soon as possible. Once the parents get back the registration document, the KG will no longer keep the school place for that student. Normally, registration fee 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 KG education policy, the approved ceilings of application fee and registration fee for KGs joining / intending to join the Scheme are as follows:
 - (i) Application fee (\$40)
 - (ii) Registration fee
 - \$970 for HD session

- \$1,570 for WD session

25. Schools are not allowed to 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 2019 to help parents find a K1 place for their children.
27. Under the KG education policy, while student admission in principle continues to be school-based, Scheme-KGs should comply with the requirements as stipulated in paragraphs 4 to 7 of EDBCM No. 87/2018. Under special circumstances, if Scheme-KGs still have vacancies and individual children (including those at risk of developmental delay and NCS children) encounter difficulties in applying for admission, Regional Education Offices and Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres will make referrals as appropriate.

Education Bureau

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

KGs are required to upload the information below to school webpage^{note} and/or via different channels to inform parents in advance on or before 20 September 2018 (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

^{note} 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 school webpage (e.g. “If you need English version of the information, please call xxxx xxxx to contact Ms/Mr XXX of our school”), to let parents know how to obtain the English version of the information.