

Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (2018/19 School Year)
Voucher Redemption
Questions and Answers

1. Voucher Redemption

1.1 Q: What is “voucher redemption”?

A: Under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme¹, eligible pupils are issued with a Certificate of Eligibility² (CE). For KGs joining the PEVS in the 2016/17 school year but did not apply for or have not been approved for joining the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme, their current pupils who have been attending that particular KG before the 2018/19 school year and with a valid Certificate of Eligibility (CE) may continue to receive PEVS fee subsidies if they keep on attending eligible classes (that is the Upper Kindergarten (K3) class in the 2018/19 school year) in that particular KG until they leave. If the pupils changes to another KG, they will not be able to receive any further PEVS fee subsidies. If the pupils leave the KG and then are re-admitted to the same KG, they will not be able to receive any further PEVS fee subsidies. EDB will calculate fee subsidy amounts based on the number of pupils holding valid CE in the kindergartens eligible for voucher redemption³. KGs collect from parents the school fee after voucher redemption as specified on the “Fees Certificate” and EDB redeems the fee subsidy to the KGs attended by the pupils. This mode of subsidy provision is known as “voucher redemption”.

1.2 Q: Can parents of pupils redeem the voucher direct from EDB?

A: Parents receive fee subsidy through the PEVS KGs which their children attend. They cannot redeem the voucher direct from EDB.

1.3 Q: How should KGs collect school fees? How does fee collection from pupils who hold CE differ from that from pupils who do not hold CE?

A: The school fees approved for collection by KGs have been specified on the “Fees Certificate”. Pupils who do not hold CE are not eligible for fee subsidy, and thus KGs should charge them the school fees without voucher subsidy. As for pupils who hold CE, KGs should charge them the school fees with education voucher redeemed.

¹ Hereinafter abbreviated as PEVS

² Hereinafter abbreviated as CE

³ Hereinafter abbreviated as KG

- 1.4 Q: If the annual school fee for the 2018/19 school year charged by a KG is less than the voucher value (i.e. \$24,150), will parents receive the difference between the school fee and the subsidy?
- A: If the annual school fee charged by a KG (e.g. \$20,000) is less than the voucher value, parents do not have to pay school fee and will not receive the difference between the school fee and the subsidy.
- 1.5 Q: For parents receiving assistance under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) of the Social Welfare Department, if their children have been attending an eligible KG before the 2018/19 school year, with a valid CE and would keep on attending eligible classes in that particular KG, can they receive fee subsidy under the PEVS?
- A: They may.
- 1.6 Q: Are pupils of families on CSSA also eligible for education related subsidy on top of fee subsidy under the PEVS?
- A: In case additional financial assistance on top of the subsidy from the voucher is required by families in receipt of CSSA, they should approach the Social Welfare Department direct for additional assistance under the CSSA Scheme. They are not required to apply for fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) from the SFO. For enquiries about applications for assistance under the CSSA Scheme for pre-primary education may be made to the Social Welfare Department (Hotline: 2343 2255).
- 1.7 Q: If children holding the CE repeat their study in the Lower Kindergarten (K2) or Upper Kindergarten (K3) classes in the 2018/19 school year or the Upper Kindergarten (K3) class in the 2018/19 school year in the same eligible KG during the CE's valid period, and require more than 3 years' time to complete kindergarten education, will the validity period of the CE be extended?
- A: The maximum validity period of the CE is three years. The CE is valid for use within its validity period and will expire afterwards. The PEVS will end by the 2018/19 school year.

2. Calculation Method and Arrangement of Subsidy Disbursement

2.1 Q: How does EDB calculate the amount of the fee subsidy?

A: In the 2018/19 school year, the voucher value is **\$24,150** per pupil per annum. If the inclusive fee of an eligible KG course is lower than the voucher value, the amount of subsidy per instalment is calculated upon the actual school fee.

Since the 2012/13 school year, PEVS fee subsidy is disbursed according to the start month and number of instalments of eligible KG courses approved on the “Fees Certificate” (i.e. from August or September by 10/11/12 instalments).

Amount of fee subsidy per instalment for eligible KG courses in the 2018/19 school year are as below:

School fee collected by 10 instalments	School fee collected by 11 instalments	School fee collected by 12 instalments
\$2,415	1st instalment \$2,200 Remaining 10 instalments \$2,195	1st instalment \$2,018 Remaining 11 instalments \$2,012

However, if the inclusive fee of an eligible KG course is lower than the voucher value under the PEVS, the amount of subsidy per instalment is calculated upon the actual school fee.

2.2 Q: How to calculate the fee subsidy for KGs which have courses commencing in August and September respectively?

A: If a KG has courses commencing in August and September respectively, the amount of voucher is calculated as follows:

- The amount of voucher redeemed in August:

Number of pupils in August studying in courses that commence in August x Subsidy amount for August

- The amount of voucher redeemed in September:

Number of pupils in September studying in courses that commence in August x Subsidy amount of the course for September + Number of pupils in September studying in courses that commence in September x Subsidy amount of the course for September

2.3 Q: What are the arrangements for disbursement of PEVS fee subsidy?

A: Provisional fee subsidy is disbursed early each month according to the approved start month and number of instalments of eligible KG courses approved on the “Fees Certificate”. The first instalment of provisional fee subsidy is disbursed at the beginning of August or September, depending on the start month of KG courses. In the first few months of a school year, fee subsidy will be disbursed according to the projected enrolment reported by KGs in late June through Form 1, while starting from November, fee subsidy will be disbursed in accordance with the pupil information as reported by KGs in the previous month.

EDB will, in 3 phases, calculate the fee subsidy based on the updated pupil attendance information due to changes such as pupils’ transfer in or out of school and pupils’ non-attendance for an entire month reported by KGs. The adjustment of fee subsidy will be conducted in November 2018, March and August 2019. Underpayment of fee subsidy will be settled in December 2018, April and September 2019, whereas overpayment of fee subsidy will be deducted from the upcoming provisional subsidy.

2.4 Q: Can disbursement of PEVS fee subsidy for the 2018/19 school year be advanced to August 2018 for KGs with courses commencing in September 2018?

A: With effect from the 2012/13 school year, fee subsidy is disbursed to KGs according to their approved tuition fee payment schedules to streamline administrative and accounting procedures. As such, for KGs with courses commencing in September, fee subsidy will be disbursed from September 2018 according to their approved tuition fee payment schedules. This Bureau will not advance the disbursement of fee subsidy and the KGs concerned have to pay attention to their financial arrangement in August.

3. Dropouts and Absentees

3.1 Q: Is voucher redemption still possible if a pupil holding a CE is transferred from one KG to another during the school year?

A: For Kindergartens (KG) joining the PEVS in the 2016/17 school year but did not apply for or have not been approved for joining the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme, their current pupils who have been attending that particular KG before the 2018/19 school year and with a valid Certificate of Eligibility (CE) may continue to receive PEVS fee subsidies if they keep on attending eligible classes (that is the Upper Kindergarten (K3) class in the 2018/19 school year) in that particular KG until they leave. If the pupils changes to another KG, they will not be able to receive any further PEVS fee subsidies. If the pupils leave the KG and then are re-admitted to the same KG, they will not be able to receive any

further PEVS fee subsidies.

3.2 Q: How do KGs know the effective month of a CE ?

A: The validity period is printed on the CE issued by the SFO. For example:

- **“This Certificate is valid for the period from the start of the 2017/18 school year up to the end of the 2018/19 school year”**

The CE is valid for voucher redemption for 2 school years from 2017/18 to 2018/19.

- **“This Certificate is valid from the month of December in 2017 up to the end of the 2018/19 school year”**

The CE is valid for voucher redemption from December 2017 to the end of 2018/19.

- **“This Certificate is valid from the start of the 2017/18 school year up to the month of October in 2018”**

The CE is valid for voucher redemption in the 2017/18 school year to October 2018.

KGs should check the validity period of CE upon receipt. Pupils will not be eligible for voucher redemption outside the validity period specified on their respective CE. From the 2010/11 school year, EDB will no longer remind KGs in writing of any CE that are going to expire.

3.3 Q: If pupils are granted conditional stay in Hong Kong by the Immigration Department, can they keep on using CE after expiry of the period of stay? Can the CE remain effective until the end of the school year?

A: For pupils granted conditional stay in Hong Kong, the validity period for receiving the fee subsidy should last until the end of their permitted stay. The expiry date of a CE is clearly shown on the CE. If permission has subsequently been granted by the Immigration Department to extend the stay of the pupils in Hong Kong, their parents are required to inform the SFO in writing for re-assessment of the eligibility of the pupils for the PEVS. Parents are advised to send in copies of the pupils' documentary evidence as well as those of theirs and their spouse's showing the immigration endorsement for the extension of stay in Hong Kong to SFO together with the notification letter. Where qualified, the pupils will be issued with another CE showing the new validity period. To avoid disruption in the receipt of subsidy under the PEVS, parents are required to send their request to SFO preferably one month or earlier before the expiry of the original visa of the pupils. (SFO enquiry hotline: 2802 2345).

The identity documents held by these pupils such as passports and visas are different from those held by local pupils. KGs should pay special attention to this and can remind parents concerned at least one month or earlier before the granted period of stay expires. The CE is invalid upon expiry of the period of stay and KGs will no longer be able to redeem the fee subsidy of the pupils.

3.4 Q: Some KGs may require parents to give sufficient notice before their children's withdrawal, or else they will retain the pupils' CE. Can a KG hold back pupils' CE?

A: KGs should duly inform parents of dropout procedures to avoid unnecessary disputes. CE is the property of pupils. When a pupil leaves the KG after completion of the KG course or drops out, the original copy of his/her CE is returned to his/her parent.

3.5 Q: How should KGs handle CE of graduating pupils? If parents do not get back the CE after their children's graduation or withdrawal, how should KGs handle the unclaimed CE?

A: CEs are returned by KGs to parents upon pupils' completion of KG courses. There is no need for KGs to report to EDB in this regard.

KGs are advised to inform their parents in writing how they will handle unclaimed CE. For example, a KG specifies that unclaimed CE for 8 months upon graduation/ withdrawal will be considered as abandoned, and will be destroyed.

3.6 Q: If pupils receiving school fee subsidy under the PEVS are absent from school for a long time, can they still be eligible for fee subsidy during the period of absence? If there are such cases of absence, do KGs have to report to EDB?

A: To be entitled to receive fee subsidy for a month, eligible student studying in a PEVS KG must have attended KG class in that month. Generally speaking, under the PEVS, if pupils are absent from school for a whole month, i.e. the period of absence covers the first day through the last day of a calendar month, they will not be entitled to receive the fee subsidy for that calendar month. Notwithstanding that, special cases (e.g. illness) with documentary proof are at EDB's discretion with consideration given on an individual case-by-case basis. If applicable, the certified true copy of documentary proof (e.g. certificate of sick leave/admission to hospital) should be submitted to EDB by KGs together with duly completed Form 4. EDB will determine on a case-by-case basis whether to suspend the disbursement of the fee subsidy concerned.

- 3.7 Q: Why do KGs have to report cases of non-attendance for a whole month?
- A: Under the PEVS, parents receive fee subsidy while KGs redeem vouchers for pupils holding valid CE. As PEVS fee subsidy is government-funded, KGs are required to report cases of non-attendance for a whole month so that EDB can determine on a case-by-case basis whether to suspend the disbursement of the fee subsidy concerned.
- 3.8 Q: If parents of pupils who are absent for a whole month wish to apply for the fee subsidy for that month, can they submit the documentary proof to EDB directly?
- A: Under the PEVS, KGs are required to report to EDB on cases of pupil non-attendance for a whole month. When parents apply for the fee subsidy for the absent month, KGs have to verify the documentary proof provided by parents before submission to EDB. Generally speaking, pupils who are absent from school for a whole month will not be entitled to receive the fee subsidy for that month. Notwithstanding that, special cases (e.g. illness) with documentary proof are at EDB's discretion with consideration given on an individual case-by-case basis.
- 3.9 Q: As pupils who are absent for a whole month are not entitled to receive fee subsidy, can KGs charge these pupils fee without voucher subsidy for that month?
- A: School fee is calculated on annual basis, and collected by monthly instalments. The school fee collected by a KG from a pupil should be equal to the sum of "Fee with Education Voucher Redeemed" and the amount of fee subsidy under PEVS. Notwithstanding that, if a pupil is not eligible for fee subsidy for a certain month due to non-attendance for a whole month, the school fee for that month will be the school fee without voucher subsidy. KGs are advised to inform parents of the arrangements of pupils' non-attendance for a whole month upon admission of their children.

4. Reporting Pupil Information

- 4.1 Q: What is the purpose of reporting pupil attendance information?
- A: Premised upon the pupil attendance information, the number of pupils eligible for voucher redemption in each month can be worked out for calculation of the fee subsidy concerned, and hence any overpayment or underpayment of the subsidy can be adjusted.

4.2 Q: Is there any mechanism in place to monitor KGs' report of pupil information?

A: Surprise headcount inspections are conducted to selected KGs to check if pupils receiving fee subsidy are attending the KGs, original copies of pupils' CE are kept properly in KGs, and the pupil information reported by KGs is accurate. In addition, relevant government sections will inspect KGs from time to time to check the pupil information.

KGs should report pupil changes timely (especially cases of non-attendance for a whole month), and keep pupil attendance records in a systematic way, such as having separate attendance registers of half-day and whole-day classes of the same level.

4.3 Q: How should KGs submit information of pupils holding CE to EDB?

A: KGs should

- Before 12 September 2018, update the information of their pupils who are studying in KG courses of the KG in August (if commence in August) and September in the 2018/19 school year via the function "Pupil Information" of the "KEVRS". The updating include
 - i. confirming the information of pupils attending Lower Kindergarten and Upper Kindergarten in the KGs, removing the records of pupils who had left by the end of the previous school year; and
 - ii. reporting the last date of attendance of the pupils who dropped out after the start of the 2018/19 school year.
- On or after 12 September 2018, report course changes or dropouts within 7 days of occurrence either via the function "Reporting Changes on Pupil Information" of the "KEVRS" or by fax with standard form.
- On or after 12 September 2018, report cases of non-attendance for entire month within 7 days of occurrence by fax with standard form.

Standard forms for reporting pupil changes are available at EDB webpage "New Milestone of Kindergarten Education" at www.edb.gov.hk/pre-primary_e. For the sake of reducing clerical work and making early report of pupil information, submission via the "KEVRS" is highly preferred.

4.4 Q: How do KGs report the information of pupils without CE to EDB?

A: KGs are not required to report information of pupils not holding a CE to EDB.

4.5 Q: Will EDB stop accepting reporting of pupil information changes by fax?

A: To cater for the needs of individual KGs, EDB still accepts KGs' reporting of pupil changes by fax for the time being. However, for the sake of reducing clerical work and making early report of pupil information, submission via the "KEVRS" is highly preferred.

4.6 Q: How do KGs handle pupils' alteration of name?

A: Parents may choose not to alter the pupil's name on CE provided that parents can produce a Hong Kong Birth Certificate/ a valid legal document with the addition/alteration of name, to support that both the new and the old names refer to the same pupil. In such cases, KG can still redeem the voucher in respect of the pupil even though the CE bears pupil's old name. KG should put the photocopies of such documents together with the pupil's CE for checking by EDB. Since parents do not alter the name on CE, KG should refer the pupil's old name on CE whenever reporting pupil information to EDB.

Parents may also apply to the SFO for alteration of name on CE. A fee is charged for the application. Upon receipt of new CE with the new name, pupil should hand in the new CE to KG for retention. KG should then inform EDB via the function "New Intake" in "Reporting Changes on Pupil Information" of the "KEVRS" or by faxing duly completed Form 6 for updating record. From then onwards, pupil's new name should be used in reporting pupil information to EDB.

EDB

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