

What are Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools ?

Following the advancement of our society, there is a need to increase the diversity in our school system and DSS schools emerge. Hence, the introduction of DSS schools is an alternative to public sector schools which provides more choices for parents.

As compared with government and aided schools, DSS schools are allowed to have greater flexibility in various areas including resources deployment, curriculum design and student admission, etc.

How does the Government subsidize DSS schools?

The amount of recurrent government subsidy received by DSS schools depends on the level of school fees and enrolment. If the fee level does not exceed $2 \frac{1}{3}$ of the average unit cost of an aided school place, the amount of recurrent subsidy received for each eligible student will be equal to the average unit cost of an aided school place. Beyond this level, the Government will not provide any recurrent subsidy.

The amount of subsidy received by a DSS school also depends on its enrolment.

Why do DSS schools collect school fees ?

DSS schools collect school fees as a source of income to provide additional support services for students. For example, employing more teachers for improving teacher to student ratio, organizing more student enrichment programmes, designing more diversified curricula to develop the multiple intelligences of students, and improving school facilities and teaching environment.

At present, many DSS schools do not charge high school fees. By making good use of government subsidies, they can operate smoothly.

Will disadvantaged students be excluded from studying in DSS schools ?

DSS schools should set aside at least 10% of their total school fee income for fee remission/scholarship for parents to apply. If a DSS school charges a school fee between $\frac{2}{3}$ (two-third) and $2\frac{1}{3}$ (two and one-third) of the DSS unit subsidy rate, the school should set aside 50 cents for the fee remission /scholarship for every additional dollar charged over and above $\frac{2}{3}$ (two-third) of the DSS unit subsidy rate. As such, students will not be deprived of the opportunity to attend DSS schools solely because of their inability to pay fees.

Although DSS schools have greater flexibility in student admission, they are required to establish reasonable and professionally sound admission criteria that are consistent with their own tradition and educational objectives. Students' family background should not be one of the admission criteria.

Will Government's commitment to education be reduced by introducing DSS schools ?

The introduction of the DSS will not affect Government's commitment to education. At present, DSS schools account for about 9% of publicly funded schools, while public sector schools (i.e. government and aided schools) will continue to be the majority in the Hong Kong school system. The Government will continue its commitment to education and endeavor to enhance the quality of education in the public sector.

How does the Government assure the quality of DSS schools ?

DSS schools are required to enter into service agreements with the Government. After having joined the DSS for 5 years, DSS schools are required to undergo a Comprehensive Review to ensure their quality of operation. Moreover, Focus Inspection and External School Review would also be conducted to DSS schools from time to time for quality assurance.

Enquiries

For information on individual DSS schools, please visit their respective school websites or contact the relevant Regional Education Office.

For details of the DSS policy, please contact the School Governance and Efficiency 1 Section. (Tel: 3509 7463)