Operation of Whole-day Primary Schools

Introduction

1. This document intends to provide information on the operation of whole-day primary schools. It may serve as a useful reference for school managers and school heads who are operating whole-day primary schools or planning to operate one. The operation of whole-day primary schools will enable pupils to have more time and opportunities to interact with teachers, socialise with peers and participate in extra-curricular activities. It also provides opportunities for schools to build up a close working relationship with parents. To facilitate learning and teaching in whole-day schools, the Education Bureau has provided additional resources to these schools. These include:

  (a) Enhanced class grant ;

  (b) Enhanced teacher-to-class ratio ;

  (c) Enhanced senior teacher ratio ; and

  (d) Non-recurrent grant for additional furniture to facilitate lunch arrangement.

The Education Bureau will review from time to time the need for additional resources to enable the effective operation of primary schools in the whole-day mode.

Management and Co-ordination

2. As the conditions and needs of pupils vary from school to school, schools are encouraged to adopt a school-based approach in the management and co-ordination of matters related to whole-day schooling. Schools should draw up plans and achievement targets for effective implementation of whole-day schooling. Corresponding plans for the use of resources, both human and financial, should be made to turn the targets into action. A monitoring and review system should be put in place. It is advisable for school heads to set up co-ordination groups to provide support in planning, co-ordination, monitoring and review. The groups should best be chaired by senior members of the teaching staff and comprise other teachers and parents' representatives.

3. On the basis of their individual situation, schools may make reference to the following in drawing up their plans :

  (a) While the school day is longer, there is more flexibility for schools to arrange their time-tables with a fair proportion of time allocated to the core-curriculum, co-curricular activities, counselling services, recesses and lunch, etc. to nurture a caring and open learning culture in schools. Normally, students spend an average of about 7 hours a day in school, including two recesses of about 20 minutes each and a

lunch break of about 1 hour at school per school day.

(b)   A regular school day may start between 8 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. so that parents could bring their children to school before going to work hence strengthening teacher-parent relationship.

(c)   Appropriate arrangements such as opening up classrooms, halls and covered playgrounds etc. should be made to cater for pupils staying in for lunch.

(d)   When arranging meals, schools may refer to the circular on "Meal Arrangements in Schools" issued by the Bureau currently in force (EDB Circular No. 17/2009).

(e)   Teachers may make use of the longer school hours for conducting visits, field trips, co-curricular activities, guidance / counselling services and remedial teaching.

(f)   Schools may arrange more double periods, longer periods of 45-55 minutes or a combination of long and short periods to provide a wide range of learning experiences to meet different learning needs and objectives.

(g)   Schools may allocate more class teacher periods to provide moral and civic education and to help students consolidate learning; arrange tutorial sessions to cater for students who need extra help in academic work so that they can do their assignments under teachers' guidance.

School Curriculum

4.   In principle, the time allocation for different key learning areas and subjects in the curriculum should be the same in both whole-day and bi-sessional primary schools. As, in the case of whole-day primary schools where the school day is longer, there is a greater flexibility in the use of learning time to implement the core-curriculum and to provide students with diversified learning experiences. These may include programmes for promoting reading to learn, moral and civic education, national education, religious education, students' physical and aesthetic development, the use of information technology for interactive learning, cross-curricular learning and other learning experiences, etc. to enhance students' whole person development and lifelong learning capabilities. Schools may allocate extra time to class teacher periods, assemblies, remedial teaching, enhancement studies, reading lessons, library periods, etc. to enhance children's interest in learning and to cater for the learning diversity. Besides, more interactive and creative group learning could be flexibly arranged. Diversified pedagogical practices and modes of assessment could also be applied to enhance student learning. A fixed period of time may also be allocated to the conduct of a balanced programme of co-curricular activities to provide life-wide learning opportunities so as to develop students' potential. For more details on

effective use of learning time, please refer to Booklet 2 of the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (2002).

Extra-curricular Activities

5.　　　Extra-curricular activities may be conducted during school hours or on Saturday morning or any other time deemed appropriate.　The following are some examples of time allocation :

(a)　　The last period of any two days of the teaching week or the last double period of any one day of the teaching week may be used for conducting extra-curricular activities.

(b)　　Activities which involve the hiring of outside instructors may be considered being arranged on Saturday morning.

(c)　　Immediately after each of the half yearly examination, post-examination activity week may be organised.

Information on the planning and implementation of extra-curricular activities in schools is at Annex 1.

Library Services

6.　　　Facilitating access to knowledge and information is pivotal to the successful development of independent, life-long learners. The school library plays a significant role in this.　Every effort should be made to encourage pupils to make full use of the learning resources in the library.　Information on school library development and resources is at Annex 2.

Guidance Activities

7.　　　Whole-day schooling allows more time (e.g. lunch break, class periods etc.) for contacts between teachers and pupils which will help to enhance communication and improve teacher-pupil relations.　Through positive interaction with teachers, pupils feel accepted and valued which in turn help them develop positive self-esteem.

8.　　　More time can be allocated to organising a variety of preventive and developmental guidance activities for pupils.　Suggestions on these guidance activities are at Annex 3.

Extra-Curricular Activities in Schools

Setting goals

1.   Since Extra-curricular activities (ECA) are part of the curriculum to promote life-wide learning, they can be seen as a means of accomplishing the goals of education. It follows that before carrying out ECA, we should set up distinct goals according to the environment of the individual schools and the needs of students. These goals should include aspects related to intellectual, physical, social and personality development. After the establishment of the goals, appropriate activities should be selected, with due consideration paid to the format and content which will enable the participants to best achieve these goals.

Manning ECA

2.   Following the setting of the goals, format and content of the activity, suitable personnel should be enlisted to plan and carry out the work. These include ECA advisors, teachers, students, alumni, voluntary helpers from local community, as well as parents and other staff in school. The ECA Co-ordinator should serve as a link among the different parties. It is most important of all to train the students to organise activities. Not only does this help the activity to continue for a longer period, it also develops the students' leadership ability, which remains one of the ECA goals.

The scheme of activities

3.   This does not simply involve devising activities and following up with the recruitment of participants. It also represents a stage in school development that should take into account students' interests and orientations in order to achieve the goals of education.

Establishment of various clubs and groups

4.   In relation to the set goals of ECA, we can either organise a one-off function or achieve the goals through the establishment of regular clubs or groups. In general, ECA clubs can be categorised into five types, namely, academic, sports, art, interest and social services. Depending on the situation of the individual school, the school itself may set up a balanced number of clubs. With respect to its developmental stage,

each club may devise its own activity plan, recruitment method, frequency of meeting and activity content. Each club may also, according to its own needs, discuss with the ECA Co-ordinator how to institute the management of club membership (such as admission standard, membership subscription and withdrawal), the establishment of committee members, subscription fee, etc.

Planning and running activities

5.   Whether or not an activity can be run smoothly depends firstly on a comprehensive plan. The plan includes distribution of work, timetabling, budgeting and programmes. After completing the job of planning, it is necessary to keep the students informed of the activity via proper channels. There are several common ways, such as bulletins, posters, banners, public announcements, newsletters and personal contacts. In the course of carrying out an activity, attention and counselling should be given to the students as appropriate.

Arrangement of an encouraging awards scheme

6.   One of the important aspects in the implementation of ECA is to make them self-rewarding for the participants. To achieve this objective, students should first of all be encouraged to take part in ECA and to gain experience from the process. Once students have been stimulated to try out the activities, they should be further motivated to do so by various means. An awards scheme is one of the best motivators. According to the nature of each activity, awards can comprise praise, certificates, merit points, etc.

Retention and utilisation of records

7.   Records must be kept for all activities to serve as future reference. The school should also keep for each student an activity record, listing in detail the activities the student has joined as well as his/her performance. These records will be useful in writing student references and recommendations. The ECA Co-ordinator can thus make use of these reports to assess the feasibility of new activities or to have his/her attention drawn to areas requiring notice.

Remarks:

8.   For further information, please refer to "Guidelines on Extra-curricular Activities in Schools" issued by the Bureau and the related information currently displayed on the EDB website.

School Library Development and Resources

Functions of the School Library

1.   Through purposeful provision of a diverse reading and learning resource collection, the school library provides opportunities for students to take pleasure and make meaning out of reading, and enables them to learn how to deal confidently and competently with the plethora of information available. The core functions of a school library are to provide:

(a) a resource centre where students and teachers read, share, learn and grow through interacting systematically with ample information in a variety of formats

(b) a conducive physical environment, equipped with traditional, technological and human resources, for students to engage in enjoyable reading and the development of critical reflection and purposeful learning

(c) a virtual dimension in which to conduct inquiry, use information technology to navigate for information and create knowledge independently or collaboratively

Operation of a School Library

2.   With the introduction of information technology and the Internet to schools, the school library can provide learning opportunities beyond the traditional services of book purchasing and lending. Teacher-librarians, through careful planning with principals and teachers, will ensure the provision and successful implementation of the following:

(a) Resources
   • Ready-to-use learning and teaching references and reading materials managed through an automated library system on the Intranet / Internet and maintained with the support of students / parent volunteers and / or clerical staff

   • Multimedia resources focused on the overall school curriculum and the varied needs, reading levels and interests of students

    (b) Programmes
- Independent programmes or collaborative teaching projects developed with subject teachers to equip students with study and information skills

- Reading programmes for different purposes, such as story-telling, shared reading, reading for projects across the curriculum, reading schemes, etc.

    (c) Human Resource Management
- Conduct training for student-librarians, parent volunteers, supporting staff who assist in the operation and activities of the school library

- Hold / participate in professional sharing with teachers and fellow teacher-librarians

    (d) Technical Management
- Annual plan including budget planning, operational planning, scheduling, collaborative planning with teachers and parents

- Collection building including collection development policy, sourcing and selection of library resources, cataloguing

- Collection maintenance including library automation, IT facilities and application, lending and usage policy, collection and usage assessment

- Marketing and publicity such as signs, posters, notices, campaigns, communication with teachers and parents, user feedback and survey

Role of a Teacher-Librarian

3.   The role of a teacher-librarian has evolved from that of "keeper of the books" to "information specialist". A teacher-librarian, besides planning and managing the daily operations of the school library, plays the key role as a/an:

    (a) reading resource and programme coordinator: coordinating and managing reading materials and curriculum-related resources to support the development of reading and of learning through reading

(b) information and media specialist: developing students' information skills and attitudes in using information from all formats and contexts appropriately and ethically

(c) teaching partner: supporting the studies in Key Learning Areas, teaching and assessment

(d) curriculum facilitator: working with teachers to identify student needs, required curriculum content, appropriate information resources to develop school-based curriculum strategies such as project learning and life-wide learning activities

Promotion of effective library services

4.   The following staff play an important role:

(a) The Principal

- Appreciate the importance of school library services to student reading and learning
- Appoint a trained and full-time teacher-librarian if applicable
- Ensure a team-built library collection based on the school-based curriculum and student needs
- Provide a technology-rich environment, including networks, hardware, software and technical support, for applying and using information in diverse formats and in a wide range of content areas
- Allocate time and resources to encourage and support collaborative planning and teaching among teachers and the teacher-librarian

(b) The Teachers

- Integrate reading tasks and the use of authentic information in regular learning activities and project learning
- Work in partnership with the teacher-librarian to develop student's information skills, select and provide access to resources, and engage in collaborative teaching and curriculum development
- Jointly plan and develop strategies with the teacher-librarian for promoting reading interest among students and their use of diverse source of information
- Be a role-model: read regularly and use diverse information resources for teaching, personal and social purposes

(c) The Teacher-librarian

- Maintain a flexible attitude and attend to the individual needs and differences of students and teachers
- Develop a collaborative relationship with principals, teaching colleagues and parents
- Extend the network / communication channels and professional development opportunities
- Review the strengths and weaknesses of the existing library services and programmes, and prepare enhancement plans
- Discuss with and seek advice from colleagues, principals, fellow librarians and parents
- Be a role-model: extend information skills and generic skills for personal development and life-long learning

Guidance Activities

Comprehensive Student Guidance Service

In cohering with the Education Reform and the Curriculum Reform, the new Comprehensive Student Guidance Service has been implemented in primary schools since 2002/2003, as an integral part of the school system. Under the leadership of the school heads and coordination by the Student Guidance Teachers (SGTs) / Student Guidance Officers (SGOs) / Student Guidance Personnel (SGP), the guidance team formulates guidance plans, and develops preventive and developmental guidance activities catering for the developmental needs of students. Under whole-day schooling, schools would have greater capacity to help students achieve whole-person development and life-long learning through the comprehensive student guidance service, whose four domains are briefly outlined below:

(a) Policy and Organization

- To cultivate a caring school culture, according to school's individual characteristics, for the promotion of healthy development for all students.

- To establish a school guidance team which formulates school guidance policy, plans and coordinates the guidance service.

- To effectively promote a whole-school approach to student development work through cross-subject and cross-team collaboration.

- To set up the internal and external referral system and effectively manage the school resources and community resources, to cater for students' specific need.

- To build a mechanism for school self-evaluation, under which systematic reviews are regularly conducted, to ensure the effective implementation of the student guidance service.

(b) Personal Growth Education (PGE)

- To implement school-based PGE for the developmental needs of all students.

- To develop and maximize potentials of students and to help them build up the basic knowledge, skills and attitude in the four areas of personal, social, academic and career development through planned and progressive key learning areas.

- To enhance learning motivation of students, PGE can be conducted in forms of classroom learning, short-term and structured courses, group activities, assemblies, cross-curricular activities, etc. through interactive and diversified learning designs.

- To design and develop various learning and guidance sessions/ activities in a gradual and progressive approach with reference to the developmental needs, learning ability and interest of students.

- To enhance students' self-exploration and reflection, with an emphasis on active experiential learning.

- To enhance applications in daily life with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they have acquired through connecting learning contents with life experiences and events.

(c) Responsive Service

- To help students with individual needs through individual and group counselling.

- To support students with special educational needs relating to their emotions, behavior and social development, etc. through the Student Support Team.

- To provide timely intervention and follow-up for crisis cases.

(d) Supportive Service

- To provide teachers with professional training related to guidance and counselling skills.

- To enhance team spirit, common vision, mutual support and communication among teachers in implementing the student guidance service.

- To establish a mechanism for consultation and support to teachers in handling student problems.

- To promote home-school cooperation and develop parent education.

- To develop close communication and partnership with the community organizations in promoting student guidance service.