

12 December 2014

Education Bureau Circular No. 13/2014

**Additional Support Grant for Enhancing the Support for
Boarders with Medical Complexity in Aided Special Schools**

[Note: This circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors and heads of aided special schools with a boarding section – for action; and
- (b) Supervisors and heads of other aided special schools and Heads of Sections – for information.]

Summary

This circular informs all aided special schools that with effect from the 2014/15 school year, an additional support grant will be provided for the boarding section of special schools to enhance the support for boarders with medical complexity (MC).

Details

2. As announced in the 2014 Policy Address, the Government will provide an additional grant for special schools to enhance the support for boarders with MC. The grant will be introduced with effect from the 2014/15 school year.
3. The grant will be provided to schools in accordance with the number of boarders with MC and the tier of support they require. Based on the criteria formulated jointly with the Hospital Authority (HA), the Education Bureau (EDB) will consider the information provided by the medical professionals on the MC conditions of individual boarders and the enhanced support they require, and disburse the grant to the special schools. The operational definition of MC is set out in Annex 1.
4. In setting the criteria for provision of the grant, EDB has considered the existing manpower and other resources for various types of special schools. The schools are required to deploy the grant in conjunction with the existing manpower and resources to meet the additional

support needs of the boarders concerned. To be specific, the schools may use the grant to employ additional staff (such as janitor staff, health care worker(s), etc.), procure health care service, and/or arrange for staff training. Procurement of medical equipment / consumables / materials with the grant is not allowable.

5. For the 2014/15 school year, the rates of the grant are as follows:
 - (a) \$15,000 per 5-day boarder per annum and \$30,000 per 7-day boarder per annum for those with MC who are in need of Tier 1 support, and
 - (b) \$25,000 per 5-day boarder per annum and \$50,000 per 7-day boarder per annum for those with MC who are in need of Tier 2 support,subject to a minimum provision of \$160,000 per school per annum for special schools having admitted boarders with MC.
6. The rates of the grant (including the minimum provision per school per annum for special schools with boarders with MC) will be adjusted annually in accordance with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index (CCPI). The EDB will announce the grant rates for the following school year at its website by the end of August each year.

Application procedures and arrangements for disbursement of the grant

7. With effect from October 2014, the child assessment centre and paediatric department of HA will, upon referring children with MC to EDB for special school placement, provide in the referral form the medical information of the children concerned (with items similar to those in the operational definition of MC in Annex 1), to facilitate the schools in providing appropriate support and in applying to EDB for the foregoing additional support grant. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the child assessment services of the Department of Health (DH) will also begin to provide relevant medical information of those students when they refer children with MC for special school placement.
8. If a special school with boarding section intends to apply for the grant, it is required to duly complete the Application Form for Support Grant for Boarders with Medical Complexity (Application Form) (see Annex 2) based on the latest medical information on individual boarders with MC provided by HA/DH, and submit the application to EDB (medical information on the boarders enrolled as at 15 January of the year). The duly completed Application Form is required to reach EDB by 22 January each year. Late applications will not be entertained unless under very exceptional circumstances.

9. The grant the schools are entitled will be disbursed to the schools by 2 installments for each school year. To be specific, the first installment of the grant for the following school year will be disbursed to the schools concerned in August each year, which amounts to 50% of the grant the school received in the school year which August is in. The second installment, which is calculated based on the grant the schools are entitled for the whole year having regard to the information provided by the schools in January, will be issued to the schools in February of the same year after deducting the amount issued in the first installment. The amount of the grant will be calculated according to the tier of support of each eligible boarder with MC, and the schools will be informed in writing of the amount of the grant they are entitled and the list of boarders concerned in February each year.

10. For the disbursement of the grant for the 2014/15 school year, EDB has forwarded the lists of boarders suspected of having MC to HA and DH, and the related departments will provide the medical information on these boarders as soon as possible, which will be forwarded to the schools concerned via the Special Education Support 2 Section upon receipt of such information. As the number of boarders is quite large and it takes time to complete the work, EDB will, upon receipt of the medical information, forward it to the schools by batches. Special schools may apply for the grant for these boarders by 2 batches, and the duly completed Application Forms should reach EDB by 22 January 2015 and 22 March 2015 respectively. Late applications will not be entertained unless under very exceptional circumstances. The grant for these 2 batches of applications will be issued in February 2015 and April 2015 respectively, and the schools will be informed in writing of the amount of grant they are entitled and the list of boarders concerned.

Arrangements for updating medical information

11. In the following school years, schools may apply for the additional support grant for the boarders concerned based on the foregoing medical information provided by HA or DH. In general, it is unnecessary for the medical information on the students concerned to be updated¹ annually. Under special circumstances, such as cases in which the schools find that the condition of individual boarders with MC is deteriorating, the schools may put up a request for updating the medical information. For medical information provided by the child assessment centre or paediatric department of HA, the schools may put up their request to EDB in writing with the file number of HA and full justifications. If the request is considered appropriate, it will be forwarded to HA for consideration. Depending upon the situation, HA will provide updated medical information on the boarders concerned. Before the schools make the foregoing requests, they should obtain written parental consent to the arrangement for HA to provide medical information on their children to EDB

¹ According to the professional opinions of the paediatric department of HA, the medical information they issue on the students concerned will generally be valid for at least 2 years.

and the schools. HA may ask the special schools for information on the current conditions of the boarders for reference.

12. The updated Application Form and the rates of the grant are available at the website of the EDB, and they will be updated from time to time.

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/special/support-subsidy/special-school/Support-Grant-for-Boarders-with-Medical-Complexity/index.html>) [*EDB Home > Education System and Policy > Special Education > Support and Subsidy > Special School > Additional Support Grant for Boarders with Medical Complexity*]

Accounting Arrangements

13. The schools in receipt of the grant are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all income and expenditure chargeable to the support grant. The payment records should be retained for seven school years. The schools are required to properly keep the referral forms and medical information for the boarders with MC as well as the documentation of parental consent, and to provide the original version of such documents for inspection as and when required by the EDB or other related Government departments. Any over-payment of the support grant arising from incorrect entries in the Application Form will be clawed back by the end of the school year in which the incorrect entries are detected.

14. The Grant is outside the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant (EOEBG) / Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG). The usage of the support grant must be endorsed by the Incorporated Management Committee / School Management Committee and made transparent to the staff of the school. It has included all statutory employment-related payments such as employer's contributions to Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes, severance payments, leave entitlement as well as related replacement during leave, etc. Schools should ensure that utilisation of the grant can be covered by the amount of provision given. The schools will not be provided with additional funding to cover expenditure arising from the above employment. In the event of a deficit, it should firstly be met by the surplus under EOEBG/the General Domain of OEBG. Any unsettled deficit will then be borne by the school's own funds.

15. As the provision of the grant is to enable the special schools with boarding section to meet the needs of boarders with MC in a timely manner, the schools should utilize the grant according to the principle of 'individual calculation and holistic deployment', and they should not retain the surplus of the grant. That notwithstanding, in order to cater for the operational needs of the schools, EDB allows schools to retain a maximum of 20% of 12 months' provision of the grant calculated as at the end of the school year. Surplus of the grant not exceeding such maximum amount at the end

of a school year can be carried forward to the next school year and be spent only on the permitted use of the grant. The EDB will claw back the surplus of the grant which is in excess of such maximum amount. Transfer of funds out of the grant is not allowed.

16. In the first year of provision of the grant in the 2014/15 school year, in view that the schools may receive the grant in April 2015, schools are allowed to carry forward the surplus of the grant, if any, at the end of the school year to the next school year and have it spent only on the permitted use of the grant.

Enquiries

17. For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officer.

(Ms Hera CHUM)

for Permanent Secretary for Education

Operational Definition of Medical Complexity

- (I) Severe chronic conditions,
- (II) Functional limitations,
- (III) Special medical care needs; and
- (IV) Frequent or prolonged health care use.

(I) Severe chronic condition(s) –

Refer to the presence of one or more chronic clinical life-long conditions that are severe and / or associated with medical fragility. The range of condition includes but not limited to multiple congenital anomalies / genetic syndrome with multi-system involvement, severe neurologic impairments, severe respiratory problems, complex cardiac conditions, severe metabolic or endocrine problems, severe gastrointestinal problems and severe behavioral problems.

(II) Functional limitations –

Are typically severe and require assistance from technology such as tracheostomy, feeding tube or ventilator supports.

(III) Special medical care needs –

Refer to substantial health care service needs such as medical care, specialized therapy, and educational needs.

(IV) Frequent or prolonged health care use –

Refers to projected high utilization of health care resources e.g. frequent or prolonged hospitalization; multiple surgeries or ongoing involvement of multiple subspecialty services and providers.

11																						
12																						
13																						
14																						
15																						
Total No. of Boarders																						

**Schools are required to fill in the medical information of the boarders with MC concerned according to referral form for special school placement or related documents provided by HA / DH via the Education Bureau (EDB).*

^ Please tick as appropriate.

Not applicable to those students with MC in schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with severe intellectual disability

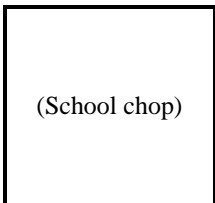
Note:

Special schools are required to cause their duly completed application forms **in both hard and soft copy** to reach Special Education Support 1 Section, EDB [Address: 5/F., East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong] by 22 January of each school year. Late applications will not be entertained unless under very exceptional circumstances.

I certify that –

- (i) In compliance with Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, our school has obtained prior written consent of the parents concerned for HA/DH to disclose information related to the medical complexity of their children to the EDB and our school;
- (ii) The medical information on the boarders with MC and the documentation of parental consent have been kept properly and will be provided for inspection as and when required by EDB or other related Government departments;
- (iii) The particulars of and medical information on the boarders with MC listed in this application are true and correct, and
- (iv) My school will refund to the EDB any over-payment of the grant.

School Name: _____



Signature of Supervisor/School Head: _____

Name of Supervisor/School Head: _____

Contact Person: _____

Date : _____

Tel No.: _____

c.c. Senior School Development Officer ()