

Sixth Round of Anti-epidemic Fund
Cleansing and Security Service Provider Subsidy Scheme
for Non-government Schools and Kindergartens
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Eligibility Criteria

Q1: Who is eligible for the Cleansing and Security Service Provider Subsidy Scheme for Non-government Schools and Kindergartens (the Scheme)?

A1: The eligible cleansing and security workers must be directly employed by non-government schools (i.e. aided schools (including special schools), schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme, caput schools, schools under the English Schools Foundation, international schools, Private Independent Schools, kindergartens and private day schools offering full and formal curriculum) or engaged by cleansing / security service contractors commissioned by non-government schools. These workers should have provided relevant services directly to non-government schools. In addition, eligible service contractors must have a valid service contract with schools or school sponsoring bodies during the period of disbursement of the allowance. Allowance will be disbursed on calendar month basis to eligible persons who have provided cleansing and security services (i.e. monthly from February to June 2022).

Q2: Is a worker eligible for the allowance if his/her job title is not cleansing worker or security guard?

A2: There is no restriction on the job titles of the beneficiaries in the Scheme. Schools or service contractors may make reasonable judgement on workers' eligibility for the allowance according to actual operational circumstances. In determining whether an individual worker is eligible to apply for the allowance, schools or service contractors should adopt a flexible approach to consider whether he/she is a frontline cleansing or security worker.

Q3: Does the Scheme cover all cleansing and security workers (including those who are working on a part-time or temporary basis)? Are part-time or temporary workers, like their full-time counterparts, eligible to receive a monthly allowance of \$2,000?

A3: Yes. The Scheme aims to show financial support to frontline cleansing and security workers who are directly employed by schools or service contractors to implement anti-epidemic measures. As such, working hours or terms of employment (e.g. full-time, part-time, etc.) do not form the basis of eligibility criteria in order to benefit more frontline workers. For the avoidance of doubt, the monthly allowance will still be paid in full to a

cleansing or security worker even if his/her contract expiry date falls on any day of the calendar month.

Q4: Are frontline cleansing and security workers employed by Private Schools Offering Non-formal Curriculum (generally referred to as “tutorial schools”) or their service contractors eligible for the allowance?

A4: Frontline cleansing and security workers employed by Private Schools Offering Non-formal Curriculum (generally referred to as “tutorial schools”) or their service contractors **are not covered** in the Scheme.

Q5: Are cleansing or security workers who have not entered into standard employment contracts with service contractors eligible for the allowance?

A5: There is no designated form of employment agreement to be made between the beneficiaries and their employers in the Scheme. Service contractors should therefore, make reasonable judgement on the person’s eligibility for the allowance before submission of application.

Q6: For clerical staff who provide clerical support as their main duties while they also assist in opening / closing the doors at the school entrance, reminding people to scan the specific QR code of the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile application upon entry into the school premises and using hand sanitizer; For teachers who mainly perform teaching duties while they will also tidy up their desks in the classrooms before the lesson starts; For cooks who are responsible for preparing meals to students while they are also required to clean the kitchen etc. All of them have made concerted efforts to combat the infectious disease on campus. Are schools allowed to submit the application for them?

A6: The main duties of the teaching staff, laboratory technicians, etc. are related to teaching and learning. Staff (such as clerical staff) who work in the general office mainly handle clerical tasks and cooks mainly prepare meals for students. They have their specific roles to play in schools and the main duties required for their respective posts are clear. As their main duties are not providing frontline cleansing / security services in schools, the examples mentioned above should not be regarded as school cleansing / security workers.

Schools should consider the following factors for making reasonable judgement on a worker’s eligibility:

- Whether the relevant worker’s main position in the school is a cleansing/ security worker
- Whether the relevant worker’s main duty in the school is related to the provision of frontline cleansing/ security services

For information or enquiries, please visit the website of the Education Bureau (EDB) : <http://www.edb.gov.hk> > School Administration and Management > Administration > About School > Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools > Application for Subsidy under the Sixth Round of Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) or contact Central Team 2 / School Development Division, EDB via the following means:

Email : sd_centralteam2@edb.gov.hk
Telephone : 2863 4666 (School Cleansing Service)
2863 4766 (School Security Service)

The EDB will approach schools to understand the services provided by their workers if necessary and will request schools to provide supporting documents.

Any person knowingly or wilfully makes any false statement or withholds any information, or misleads the government to process the application for the purpose of obtaining the allowance under the Scheme, the Government will cancel the approved allowance and the disbursed allowance should be fully returned.

The EDB will stringently follow up if any case of violation of law is identified and will pass the case to law enforcement agencies for investigation if necessary.

Q7: For service contractors providing only one-off service to schools during the allowance period, are their workers eligible to join the Scheme?

A7: The service contractor should provide regular cleansing services to the school concerned. The provision of single or one-off cleansing services on monthly basis such as pest control, rodent control, coating disinfection and monthly deep cleansing services etc are excluded from the Scheme. The EDB reserves the final right of approving the application submitted by the service contractor.

Q8 : If schools change their service contractors during the allowance period, can the newly engaged service contractors make applications under the Scheme on behalf of their cleansing and security workers?

A8 : Yes, the newly engaged service contractors should submit the relevant information regarding months for provision of services based on the contract in accordance with the eligibility criteria as stated in the Scheme.

Q9 : Will the EDB accept the application submitted after the deadline?

A9 : Application submitted after the deadline (i.e. 23 June 2022) will not be accepted unless there are sound and reasonable grounds supported with detailed justifications (e.g. the service contractor previously engaged had ceased business after submission of application and the new contractor required time to help apply for the allowance of relevant months for their

cleansing and security workers).

Q10 : **If the eligible person is engaged by one service contractor but is deployed to provide services in multiple non-government schools and / or kindergartens, is he / she eligible to apply for more than one allowances according to the number of his / her serving schools?**

A10: No. The service contractor (who is also the employer) is only allowed to apply for the allowance once per calendar month for each eligible person in the Scheme. The service contractor is only allowed to submit one application for each eligible person (in one of the serving schools) despite that fact that the person concerned provides services to multiple schools within the same month.

Q11: **Are eligible persons of the “Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for the Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in Property Management Sector” (ASPM) under the sixth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund also allowed to receive the allowance in the Scheme?**

A11 : The government has launched different schemes under the sixth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF 6.0) to cover the frontline property management (PM) workers performing duties relating to security or environmental hygiene in different premises, including the “Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for the Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in Property Management Sector” launched by Home Affairs Department in view of helping these frontline PM workers strengthen their capacity on personal protection and environmental hygiene as well as to give recognition to their committed anti-epidemic efforts at the critical juncture of the fifth wave of the epidemic.

Having considered that a cleansing or security worker may be engaged under more than one employers to provide frontline cleansing and security services in different venues, he / she can submit the application for the ASPM as well if he / she fulfils the eligibility criteria.

Nevertheless, the service contractor should not apply concurrently for the Scheme and the Scheme of “Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in Property Management Sector” or other similar schemes under the sixth round of Anti-epidemic Fund for their frontline cleansing and security workers if he / she is engaged by the same employer and provides services in the same venue even though he /she fulfils the eligibility criteria of ASPM.

The EDB reserves the final right to disburse the allowance to the relevant persons.

Q12: **Are eligible persons who benefit from the “Employment Support Scheme” (ESS) also eligible to receive allowance in the Scheme?**

A12 : The Scheme aims to give financial support to cleansing / security workers engaged by service contractors to provide services to non-government schools and to give recognition

for their committed services provided at this critical juncture whereas the “2022 Employment Support Scheme” (ESS) intends to provide wage subsidies to employers for three months (i.e. May, June and July 2022) to retain their current employees or even employ more staff when the business revives as soon as the epidemic situation permits. Given the different intentions, the eligibility criteria for these two schemes are not mutually exclusive.

Nevertheless, as “Property management, cleaning and security services” are included in the “Restricted List” of the ESS (https://www.ess.gov.hk/doc/2022ESS_RestrictedList.pdf), interested service contractors should refer to the details of the ESS (<https://www.ess.gov.hk/en/index.html>) to ascertain their eligibility before submission of application.

Application Procedures and the Amount of Allowance

Q13: Are applications to be made individually by cleansing or security workers providing services in non-government schools? What are the application procedures?

A13 : The allowance will be disbursed to eligible workers through schools or service contractors. Cleansing or security workers engaged by schools or service contractors do not apply for the allowance individually to the EDB direct.

Q14: Will the government set the ceiling on the allowance receivable by each eligible person?

A14 : No. The measure aims to give financial support to cleansing and security workers working for schools or their service contractors. We strive to keep the administrative arrangements simple and convenient to enable eligible persons to receive the allowance as soon as possible. With the assistance of schools or service contractors, each eligible person can only receive the allowance once per calendar month via the same school and / or the same service contractor during the allowance period (i.e. a total of five months from February to June 2022).

Q15: If an eligible person has not provided cleansing / security services to schools during the special school holiday, will he / she be entitled to receive the allowance of that calendar month?

A15: No. Each eligible person should perform actual duties in the month(s) apply for the allowance in order to receive the allowance for that particular month(s).

Disbursement of Allowance

- Q16: What are the eligible months for disbursement of allowance? When will the allowance be disbursed? Can one request an advance or deferred payment?**
- A16: The eligible months for disbursement of allowance refer to the calendar months in which frontline workers have provided cleansing and security services. It is a five-month period starting from February 2022 (i.e. until June 2022). Beneficiaries cannot request for advance, defer, or pay back the allowance in the subsequent months.
- Q17: Can an eligible person choose not to receive the allowance in a particular month? Or not to receive the allowance in full?**
- A17: The allowance is fixed at a flat rate of \$2,000 per month, a partial allowance is therefore not available. However, if an eligible person requests not to receive the allowance in a particular month, he / she should make arrangements with the school or service contractor concerned. The school or service contractor should maintain clear records accordingly and inform the EDB through the “Monthly Return” of the relevant calendar month or other effective means.
- Q18: What should schools or service contractors do if the eligible cleansing and security worker has resigned during the allowance period or before disbursing the allowance?**
- A18: Schools or service contractors should contact the eligible cleansing and security workers and arrange for disbursement of the allowance of the eligible months to them.
- Q19: Can schools or service contractors use the allowance to offset part of the wages/commission/bonus/employment benefits (e.g. contractual gratuity, statutory holiday pay, additional wages for working under typhoon signal no. 8 or above)?**
- A19: No. The allowance of the Scheme to be disbursed to the eligible persons through the school or service contractor is considered as the assets of the eligible persons. In this connection, the allowance should not be regarded as any part of the salary or benefits of the cleansing / security workers, and thus the school or service contractor is not allowed to deduct the allowance for whatever reasons.
- Q20: When and in what way should schools or service contractors disburse the monthly allowance?**
- A20: Schools or service contractors should disburse the allowance promptly within one month to the eligible persons upon receipt of the allowance of that respective month(s) and submit the duly completed Acknowledgement Slip to the EDB **within one month** upon release of the allowance. Relevant documents and records should be kept properly for at least 7 years for the EDB’s inspection as and when required. There is no restriction on the way of

disbursing the allowance but the allowance to be disbursed should not be regarded as any part of the salary or benefits of the eligible persons. The school or service contractor is not allowed to deduct the allowance for whatever reasons.

Q21: To whom should enquiries on disbursement of the allowance be made?

A21: Beneficiaries can approach schools or service contractors for enquiries while service contractors or schools can contact Central Team 2 of the School Development Division of the EDB.

Action by Schools

Q22: Under the Scheme, what can schools do to help their service contractors or serving cleansing and security workers? Are schools required to submit application forms for their service contractors?

A22: **For cleansing or security workers directly employed by schools**, schools should submit the application for their workers in accordance with the eligibility criteria as stated in the Scheme. Schools should disburse the allowance promptly to the eligible persons within one month upon receipt of the allowance of the respective calendar month(s).

For cleansing and security workers deployed by service contractors to schools, schools are not required to submit application form for their service contractors. Nevertheless, to enable eligible cleansing or security workers to receive the allowance as soon as practicable, schools are advised to promptly inform their service contractors of the details of the Scheme and urge them to submit applications for their eligible cleansing or security workers. Moreover, schools should sign and stamp on the application form to verify that the contract signed between service contractor and school (or its School Sponsoring Body) is still valid during the allowance period of disbursement of the allowance as well as to confirm the number of workers who have provided frontline cleansing/security service at their schools to facilitate our vetting of the application.

Q23: Are schools required to assist the EDB in disbursing the allowance to their cleansing and security workers?

A23: **For cleansing or security workers directly employed by schools**, schools are required to disburse the allowance to the eligible persons within one month upon receipt of the allowance of the respective calendar month(s).

For cleansing and security workers deployed by service contractors to schools, schools are not required to disburse the allowance. The Government will disburse the allowance to the eligible persons through service contractors.

Q24: Will the EDB contact the schools directly regarding the submission of supplementary documents for the Scheme?

A24: In case of enquiries about the application, the EDB will approach schools directly to understand the services provided by service contractors and / or workers directly employed so as to process the application concerned and allow the eligible cleansing or security workers to receive the allowance as soon as possible.

Q25: Are schools obliged to assist their cleansing or security workers in applying for the allowance?

A25: Having regard to the continuous anti-epidemic efforts of frontline cleansing or security workers who work under the exposure to the high risk of infectious environment, we appeal to schools to facilitate the proper disbursement of allowance from the EDB to their eligible workers to give recognition to their efforts and diligent work, regardless of whether they are engaged by schools or service contractors.

On the other hand, we call on schools to disburse the allowance promptly within one month to their eligible cleansing or security workers upon receipt of the allowance. In addition, although schools are not the employers of the cleansing or security workers who are engaged by service contractors, we appeal to schools to urge their service contractors to disburse the allowance within one month to their eligible cleansing or security workers for receiving the grant.

Q26: What should schools do if they find out that their service contractors did not disburse the allowance to eligible workers after receiving the allowance?

A26: In case the service contractor was found not disbursing the allowance to the eligible persons on the acknowledgement slip, the relevant service contractor may be liable to prosecution. The Government will also cancel the approved allowance and the whole sum of the disbursed allowance should be returned to the Government.

In accordance with the EDB Circular Memorandum No. 61/2022, if schools found out that the service contractor did not disburse the allowance to the eligible workers upon receipt of the allowance from the EDB, schools should report such serious misconduct case immediately to Central Team 2 / School Development Division for EDB's follow up as soon as possible. Besides, schools should record the misconduct case which will serve as a factor for considering whether the relevant service contractor would be invited for bidding the forthcoming contracts for provision of services to schools.