

National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, Regional Flag and Regional Emblem

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Matters relating to the display of the national flag and regional flag, conduct of a national flag raising ceremony, and playing and singing of the national anthem

Q1: It is stipulated in the Education Bureau (EDB) Circular No. 6/2024 “National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, Regional Flag and Regional Emblem” that schools must display the national flag on each school day and display the regional flag alongside the national flag if there are adequate flagpoles, as well as conduct a national flag raising ceremony weekly. Will the EDB provide guidelines on the display of the national flag and regional flag, as well as conduct of a national flag raising ceremony for schools?

A1: The EDB has established a theme-based resources webpage on “Getting to know the National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, Regional Flag and Regional Emblem” (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/nationalsymbols>), providing primary and secondary schools with learning and teaching resources, including brief descriptions of the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem, points to note when displaying the national flag and regional flag at schools, as well as relevant materials and useful links for schools’ reference. For details on the regulation governing the display and use of the national flag and regional flag and the etiquette to be followed during a national flag raising ceremony and when the national anthem is being played and sung, schools should refer to the relevant provisions of the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance (NFNEO), the amended Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance (RFREO) and the National Anthem Ordinance (NAO), as well as the webpage of the Protocol Division of the Government Secretariat (<https://www.protocol.gov.hk/en/flags.html>). As for the arrangements for raising the national flag and regional flag in a national raising ceremony, the EDB has uploaded a demonstration video for schools’ reference (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/demonstrationvideo>).

Q2: Since New Year's Day (1 January), Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Establishment Day (1 July) and National Day (1 October) are all general holidays, is it a must for schools to display the national flag (and regional flag), conduct a national flag raising ceremony and play and sing the national anthem on these days?

A2: It is stipulated in the EDB Circular No. 6/2024 that schools must display the national flag on each school day. On the important days of New Year's Day, HKSAR Establishment Day and National Day, schools must arrange their staff to return to schools to display the national flag on these days. Schools should display the regional flag alongside the national flag if there are adequate flagpoles. As for the national flag raising ceremony and the playing and singing of the national anthem, schools may arrange them to be held either on these days or on the preceding/following school day having regard to their own circumstances.

Q3: What requirements or standards should be observed when participating in a national flag raising ceremony? Can the school song be played or sung immediately after the national anthem?

A3: All participants in a national flag raising ceremony must stand solemnly facing the national flag, look at the national flag with respectful attention, and sing the national anthem. To avoid the singing voice being masked by the music of the national anthem, schools are recommended by the EDB to adopt the version of the national anthem with both vocal music and instrumental accompaniment (Audio track – Choir). Moreover, to embody the solemnity of the national anthem, any other songs (such as school song) should not be played or sung right after the national anthem to avoid being misunderstood that they are the same song. Therefore, after singing the national anthem, a discrete session, such as delivery of speech under the national flag, must be arranged before proceeding to the playing or singing of other songs.

Q4: If primary and secondary schools do not have standing flagpoles due to constraints of environment or facilities in campus, can they use other means to display the national flag on each school day and conduct a national flag raising ceremony weekly?

What requirements or standards should be observed when conducting a national flag raising ceremony through other means?

A4: Currently, most primary and secondary schools have installed standing flagpoles. Those which have not installed flagpoles should have standing flagpoles installed in suitable locations as far as possible. If it is not possible to install standing flagpoles due to constraints of environment or facilities in campus, schools should purchase movable flagpoles for displaying the national flag (and regional flag) on each school day and conducting a national flag raising ceremony weekly. When displaying the national flag and regional flag or conducting a national flag raising ceremony, schools must ensure that the national flag and regional flag are displayed with dignity and respect, and follow the regulation governing the display and use of the national flag and regional flag. All participants of a national flag raising ceremony, including school staff and students, are required to observe the relevant etiquette in order to show their respect for the country and demonstrate their good quality as nationals. Schools should enable students to learn about the relevant regulation and etiquette through attending national flag raising ceremonies in person, and enhance the sense of nationhood and national identity among students through contextual influences. In normal circumstances, schools should not play video of a national flag raising ceremony in place of such on-spot experience.

Q5: Which grant can schools use to cover the expenditure on procurement of movable flagpoles, national flags or regional flags?

A5: For aided schools, the related expenditure can be covered by the Operating Expenses Block Grant/Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant according to the respective principles on the use of grant and the relevant procedures with the endorsement of the school management committees/incorporated management committees. For Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, the expenditure can be covered by the DSS subsidy according to the prevailing principles on the use of government funds. For caput schools, the expenditure arising from procurement of movable flagpoles, national flags or regional flags will be taken into account when calculating the Fee Subsidy for schools.

The aforementioned schools should keep a record of their income and expenditure for audit purpose.

Q6: If a school's timetable is cycle-based (such as six-day cycle), can the school adopt cycle as the basis and conduct a national flag raising ceremony once a cycle?

A6: The significance of the flag raising ceremony is to enhance the sense of nationhood and national identity among students through contextual influences. Schools should make appropriate plans and arrangements on the premise that the requirements for conducting a national flag raising ceremony weekly can be met. Therefore, schools with a cycle-based timetable may conduct a national flag raising ceremony on any day within a week having regard to the actual circumstances.

Q7: While schools must display the national flag (and regional flag) on each school day, when all students or teachers have to participate in an activity outside campus (such as swimming gala/athletic meet) on particular school days, are schools still required to display the national flag (and regional flag) on campus?

A7: On school days when all students or teachers have to participate in an activity outside campus, schools may exercise discretion in making arrangements for displaying the national flag (and regional flag) according to the actual circumstances. In general, if there are staff returning to school to perform duties, they should be arranged to display the national flag (and regional flag) in the school as far as possible.

Q8: Are there any specifications on the time at which the national flag (and regional flag) should be displayed on each school day and a national flag raising ceremony should be held weekly at schools? How do schools ensure that the relevant requirements are met?

A8: Schools should display the national flag (and regional flag) and conduct national flag raising ceremonies according to the school timetable. In normal circumstances, the national flag (and

regional flag) should be raised before class in the morning and lowered in the evening, but should not be hoisted overnight. Schools should establish relevant procedures and manpower arrangements, as well as monitoring mechanism (such as arranging their staff to check the national flag (and regional flag) and the flagpole components regularly, and whether the position of the national flag (and regional flag) is proper after it is raised). The time for conducting a national flag raising ceremony should match with the schools' operations and the arrangement of activities. In general, it should be conducted during the morning assembly. On important days or special occasions, such as graduation ceremony, swimming gala/athletic meet, schools may conduct the national flag raising ceremony before the start of the activity.

Q9: Schools are required to display the national flag on each school day. If there are adequate flagpoles, schools should display the regional flag alongside the national flag. In this connection, what should schools take note of when displaying the national flag and regional flag on each school day?

A9: Schools should display the regional flag alongside the national flag if there are adequate flagpoles. When displaying the national flag and regional flag on each school day, schools should, on the premise that the stipulations of the NFNEO and the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance (RFREO) are complied with, formulate relevant procedures and manpower planning. For example, when the national flag is flown together with the regional flag, the national flag shall be hoisted first; when lowering the national flag and regional flag in the evening, the national flag shall be lowered last.

For details on the regulation governing the display and use of the national flag and regional flag, schools should refer to the relevant provisions of the NFNEO and the RFREO, as well as the webpage of the Protocol Division of the Government Secretariat (<https://www.protocol.gov.hk/en/flags.html>). The EDB's theme-based resources webpage on "Getting to know the National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, Regional Flag and Regional Emblem" (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/nationalsymbols>) also provides primary and secondary schools with learning and teaching resources, including brief descriptions of the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem, points

to note when displaying the national flag and regional flag at school, as well as relevant materials and useful links for schools' reference.

Q10: What are the relevant requirements that schools should observe when displaying the national flag and regional flag with the school flag or other flags?

A10: Under normal circumstances, if a school displays the national flag and regional flag with other flags, the regulations set out in the NFNEO and the RFREO should be observed. For instance, the national flag shall be displayed at the centre, above other flags, or in a position of prominence; and the national flag shall be hoisted first and lowered last.

When the national flag and regional flag are displayed with flags of other organisations (such as school flags), the national flag shall be at the centre, with the regional flag on the left and the flags of the other organisations on the right. Moreover, the flags of other organisations shall not be larger than the regional flag. When the national flag of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and regional flag are displayed with other national flags (such as national flags of other countries at international schools), the national flag of the PRC shall be at the centre, with the regional flag on the left and the other national flag on the right. The other national flag should be of similar size to the national flag of the PRC.

The orientation of the left and right sides of the flags differs depending on whether they are being displayed inside or outside a building. For the display of flags inside a building, the sides are ascertained by reference to a person standing with his back to the backing wall. For the display of flags outside a building, the sides are ascertained by reference to a person standing in front of the building displaying the national and regional flags while looking towards the building.



(Image source: Website of the Protocol Division Government Secretariat
<https://www.protocol.gov.hk/en/show/show.html>)

Q11: In the event of inclement weather conditions, are schools still required to display the national flag (and regional flag) or conduct a national flag raising ceremony as stipulated?

A11: In the event of inclement weather conditions (such as tropical cyclones, persistent heavy rainfall and/or “extreme conditions”), schools with a standing flagpole installed in the outdoor area may choose not to display the national flag (and regional flag) to preserve the dignity of the national flag (and regional flag) and for safety considerations. Schools are encouraged to procure a movable flagpole to be able to conduct the national flag raising ceremony indoors under inclement weather conditions.

When the Cold or Very Hot Weather Warning is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory advising people to avoid prolonged exposure to wintry winds or under sunlight, schools may make proper arrangements (such as conducting the national flag raising ceremony indoors, promptly directing students who feel unwell to an appropriate place for a rest) depending on the actual circumstances, so that the weekly conduct of a national flag raising ceremony can be maintained.

Q12: If a school arranges to conduct a national flag raising ceremony on a specific day of the week (such as every Wednesday), and it happens that the national flag raising ceremony could not be held as scheduled due to school holidays, special situations (such as term examinations, schools as venues for public examinations) or inclement weather conditions, etc., is the school required to arrange the national flag raising ceremony on another day of the week?

A12: Schools should consider predictable factors, including school holidays and other planned school activities (such as term examinations), when compiling the timetable for the whole school year, to ensure that a national flag raising ceremony can be conducted weekly. Schools should also formulate relevant mechanisms, including contingency arrangements for special

circumstances on the days when the national flag raising ceremony is conducted, and as far as possible maintain the conduct of a national flag raising ceremony once a week.

Q13: If individual schools need to suspend face-to-face classes due to unforeseen circumstances (such as an outbreak of a communicable disease, flooding or power outage) under the school-based mechanism, are they still required to display the national flag (and regional flag) on each school day and conduct a national flag raising ceremony every week?

A13: In the event of unforeseen circumstances (such as an outbreak of a communicable disease, flooding or power outage) in which students of certain levels are still required to return to school for whole-day/half-day face-to-face classes, schools should display the national flag (and regional flag) on each school day and conduct a national flag raising ceremony weekly as usual to show their respect for the country, enhance the sense of nationhood and national identity among students. If face-to-face classes are suspended across all levels, while the school is still open and staff members return to school to perform their duties, the school should arrange to display the national flag (and regional flag). As for the national flag raising ceremony, schools may resume the arrangement of conducting a national flag raising ceremony every week after class resumption.

Q14: If schools hold activities on non-school days (such as Saturdays, Teacher Development Days), should the national flag (and regional flag) be displayed?

A14: It is stipulated in the EDB Circular No. 6/2024 that schools must display the national flag on each school day, as well as New Year's Day, HKSAR Establishment Day and National Day. Schools should display the regional flag alongside the national flag if there are adequate flagpoles. As for non-school days on which school activities are held, schools may decide whether to display the national flag (and regional flag) having regard to the actual circumstances.

Q15: In the event that the HKSAR Government announces flying the flags at half staff owing to special circumstances such as the occurrence of unfortunate events, how should the school handle it? What requirements should be observed for flying the flags at half staff?

A15: In the event that the HKSAR Government (the Government) announces flying the flags at half staff owing to special circumstances such as the occurrence of unfortunate events, schools should pay attention to the press release of the Government or notice from the EDB if special arrangement for the display of the national flag (and regional flag) has to be made. Schools should not make their own arrangements for flying the flags at half staff. In other words, unless directed by the Government, schools should display the national flag (and regional flag) as usual, or conduct a national flag raising ceremony according to the established arrangement.

When flown at half staff, the flags shall be first hoisted to the peak of the staff and then lowered to a point where the distance between the top of the flag and the peak of the staff is one third of the length of the staff; the flags, when lowered, shall be again hoisted to the peak before they are lowered. The NFNEO (<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/A401!en>) and the RFREO (<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/A602!en>) also set out the conditions for flying the flags at half staff.

Q16: Is there any requirement on the number of students and teachers that should be present at a national flag raising ceremony?

A16: As the campus size, availability of facilities, occasions for teachers and students to get together, as well as the arrangement for relevant learning activities vary among schools, it is inappropriate to prescribe a standard number of attendees for a national flag raising ceremony. Schools should make proper arrangements taking into account the actual circumstances. If conditions permit, schools are encouraged to arrange as far as practicable all staff and students to attend a national flag raising ceremony, with a view to enhancing their sense of nationhood and national identity. Where necessary, schools may have their physical national flag raising ceremonies broadcast live at the same time, and give students of each level the opportunity to participate in a physical national flag raising ceremony. All participants in a national flag raising ceremony,

whether it is participation in person or viewing of live broadcast, must observe the relevant etiquette.

Q17: Are schools required to arrange delivery of speech under the national flag in each national flag raising ceremony?

A17: The significance of the flag raising ceremony is to enhance the sense of nationhood and national identity among students through contextual influences. In normal circumstances, a national flag raising ceremony includes the delivery of speech under the national flag, of which the theme could be about national achievements and development, as well as values education, etc. Schools may decide whether a speech should be given under the national flag every time when a national flag raising ceremony is conducted according to school-based needs.

Q18: Are students of international schools required to participate in the national flag raising ceremony?

A18: The regulations concerning school education under the NAO, the NFNEO and the RFREO apply to primary and secondary schools (including special schools), which also cover international schools.

Students studying in international schools around the world should have knowledge of the local culture and history. They should also show respect for the national flag, national emblem and national anthem of the country where they are in. For the international schools in Hong Kong, as most of them have admitted local students, they are encouraged to refer to the requirements specified in the EDB Circular No. 6/2024, and display the national flag on each school day and display the regional flag alongside the national flag if there are adequate flagpoles, as well as conduct a national flag raising ceremony weekly based on the actual school circumstances, so as to enhance local students' sense of national identity and deepen foreign students' understanding of the Chinese culture. Moreover, international schools are encouraged to conduct a national flag raising ceremony on New Year's Day, HKSAR Establishment Day and National Day or on the preceding/following school day, as well as on important days (such as graduation ceremonies).

Q19: If international schools wish to raise the national flag of another country at their national flag raising ceremonies, are they required to display the national flag of the PRC at the same time? If an international school displays both the national flag of the PRC and that of another country, what requirements should be observed?

A19: International schools may display the national flags of other countries having regard to their needs and actual circumstances. When the national flag of another country is being displayed, the school should also display the national flag of the PRC, and give it a central, higher or more prominent position. They should also display the regional flag if there are adequate flagpoles.

The article on “Priority of national flag” in Schedule 3 of the NFNEO sets out the requirements for displaying the national flag of the PRC alongside other flags. For more details on the regulation governing the display of the flags, please refer to [Q10](#).

Q20: How can special schools implement the instructions stipulated in the EDB Circular No. 6/2024?

A20: Helping students acquire knowledge of the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem is not completely new to schools. Primary and secondary schools (including special schools) offering local curriculum have long been teaching students of such knowledge, with the learning contents of different values education facets (including national education and national security education) embedded in the primary and secondary school curriculum (such as General Studies at primary level, Chinese History, Music, Citizenship and Social Development at the senior secondary level) and related life-wide learning activities. Under the arrangement of “one curriculum framework for all”, students with special educational needs can also learn like other students.

Special schools basically display the national flag (and regional flag) and conduct the national flag raising ceremonies in accordance with the guidelines provided by the EDB. In making relevant arrangements, they will also take account of their students’ conditions. Individual schools may approach the EDB as

necessary and we will offer advice and support in light of their circumstances.

Q21: How can kindergartens (KGs) (including KG-cum-child care centres) implement the instructions stipulated in the EDB Circular No. 6/2024?

A21: KGs should help young children recognise Hong Kong as a part of the country and their Chinese identity, and learn about the national flag and regional flag, and the etiquette to be observed in a national flag raising ceremony, so as to foster a sense of belonging to the country and a sense of national identity. KGs are encouraged to display the national flag and regional flag, and conduct a national flag raising ceremony regularly to show respect for the country and develop a sense of nationhood and national identity among students. KGs with national flags and flagpoles are required to conduct a national flag raising ceremony when holding celebration activities for New Year's Day, HKSAR Establishment Day and National Day. Besides, schools are strongly advised to conduct a national flag raising ceremony on important days and special occasions (such as the first day of a school year, open day, graduation ceremony, school anniversary events and Chinese Culture Day).

As the size of school premises, school environment and facilities vary greatly among KGs, KGs should, in light of their own conditions, display the national flag and regional flag, and conduct the national flag raising ceremonies with reference to the arrangements applicable to primary and secondary schools.

Education on National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, Regional Flag and Regional Emblem

Q22: With the inclusion of the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem in primary and secondary education, will the EDB provide detailed guidelines in this regard?

A22: It is schools' educational obligation to enable students to learn about and respect the national flag, national emblem and national anthem, and to enhance among students a sense of nationhood and national

identity. The learning contents of different values education facets (including national education and national security education), such as the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem have been incorporated into the subjects' curricula (such as General Studies at primary level, Chinese History, Music, Citizenship and Social Development at the senior secondary level), as well as life-wide learning activities of primary and secondary schools offering the local curriculum.

The EDB will timely update the curriculum guide of the relevant subjects and enrich the learning and teaching resources of these subjects, with a view to supporting schools in imparting knowledge of the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem. We have uploaded the learning and teaching resources on the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem onto the theme-based resources webpage of "Getting to know the National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, Regional Flag and Regional Emblem" (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/nationalsymbols>), which will be updated/enriched from time to time for the reference of primary and secondary schools offering the local curriculum. An English version is available for the reference of international schools and other private schools offering solely non-local curricula.

Q23: What is the definition of "playing and singing" in the NAO?

A23: To ensure that the public have a clear understanding of the meaning of "playing and singing the national anthem" in the NAO, Section 2(3) of the NAO has provided interpretations of "playing and singing the national anthem" (except for occasions mentioned in Section 5 of the NAO), which include (a) singing the national anthem; (b) playing the national anthem on musical instruments; and (c) playing a recording of the national anthem. The provisions are set out under Section 2(3) of the NAO.

Q24: Regarding the occasions (including the national flag raising ceremonies) on which a school plays and sings the national anthem, what are the requirements on the adoption of score and recording?

A24: The NAO has clear specifications on the score and recording of the national anthem to be used. Regarding the occasions on which a school plays and sings the national anthem, the official recording provided on the website of the Government should be played or the national anthem should be played on musical instruments in accordance with the standard score provided on the website of the Government for singing the national anthem. Regarding the standard score and official recording for the playing and singing of the national anthem, please refer to the website of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: <https://www.cmab.gov.hk>
[Website of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau > Topical Issues > National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem > National Anthem](#)

Q25: Should non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students acquire knowledge of the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem? How should schools address the learning needs of NCS students in this regard?

A25: As learning the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem, as well as participating in a national flag raising ceremony are ordinary school activities, all students, including NCS students, should be involved. Schools should offer support according to their abilities on the premise that students have to respect the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, regional flag and regional emblem.

Other related matters

Q26: If a teacher fails to follow or violates the EDB's instructions, what should the school do?

A26: Teachers play a vital role in passing on knowledge and nurturing students' character, and are important role models for students. It is therefore of utmost importance that their words and deeds, which have a far-reaching impact on students' growth, must adhere to the standards of professional conduct and morality generally accepted

by the community. Teachers should acquire a correct understanding of the NFNEO, the RFREO and the NAO; show respect for the symbols and signs of the country and the Government; and cultivate in students a sense of nationhood and national identity and an affection for the Chinese people. If a teacher is found to have professional misconduct, the school should stop such violation immediately and take appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with relevant school-based procedures and mechanism, as well as relevant provisions under the Education Ordinance, Education Regulations, Codes of Aid and employment contract, etc. When learning that a teacher is suspected to have committed any serious offence or act of misconduct, the school must report the case to the EDB immediately for consideration of any necessary follow-up actions, including reviewing the teacher registration status of the teacher concerned.

Q27: If parents refuse to let their children participate in the national flag raising ceremonies at schools, how should the school handle it? If individual students show disrespect for the national flag, national anthem or regional flag in a national flag raising ceremony, how should the school follow up?

A27: If parents refuse to let their children participate in the national flag raising ceremonies at schools, schools should explain to the parents concerned that the national flag raising ceremonies are ordinary learning activities at schools, which all students should take part in.

Schools should educate students on the etiquette to be followed in a national flag raising ceremony, such as standing solemnly and deporting themselves with dignity, so as to enhance a sense of nationhood and national identity among students. They should follow up immediately if students behave inappropriately and cause disruption to the national flag raising ceremony, including requesting the concerned students to stop such misbehaviour at once. Where necessary, schools may first remove the concerned students from the venue to allow the ceremony to continue in a solemn manner. In addition, schools should follow up on the students'

misbehaviour according to the prevailing guidance and discipline strategies. These include understanding the cause of the students' misbehaviour and providing suitable counselling and follow-up support depending on their explanation and specific circumstances, with a view to helping them make improvement.

Q28: If outsiders or parents do not conform with the proceedings of a national flag raising ceremony (such as not standing solemnly or not deporting themselves with dignity), how should the school handle it?

A28: As far as possible, schools should brief participants on the procedures before a national flag raising ceremony and remind them of the proper etiquette to be observed during the proceedings. If individuals are found to be ignoring the prescribed arrangements during the proceedings, the school may remind them politely. Moreover, schools should maintain good communication with parents through day-to-day contact and foster home-school cooperation to enable them to understand the meaning of conducting a national flag raising ceremony during individual activities. With concerted efforts, students' sense of national identity can be enhanced.

**Education Bureau
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