

School Allocation Exercise (SAE) 2023
Allocation of vacant school premises/school sites
for international school development

Frequently Asked Questions for Expression of Interest (EoI)

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| Q1. | Who may express interests for the two vacant school premises (VSP)/school sites in this exercise? |
| A1. | All school operators and other interested parties in Hong Kong or outside the territory who have passion and ability to operate a quality international school in Hong Kong on a self-financing basis may express interest for the two concerned VSP/school sites. The respondent who signed on the reply form should <i>de facto</i> be the school sponsoring body (SSB)/operator of the proposed school in future, who has the right and the capacity to execute a tenancy agreement/land lease with the Government of the HKSAR for allocation of the VSP/school site. Please note that the respondent should have obtained/be able to obtain <i>incorporation status</i> and <i>tax exemption status in Hong Kong</i> , based on the relevant local ordinances (please refer to <i>basic requirement 1(g) of the “Note to Respondents”</i>). |
| Q2. | May I express interest if I have yet to obtain incorporation status and/or tax exemption status in Hong Kong? |
| A2. | Yes. Respondents will not be considered adversely if the incorporation status and tax exemption status requirements have not been met at this stage. However, when submitting detailed proposal at the stage of the School Allocation Exercise, applicants should provide documentary proof(s) showing that they have fulfilled the requirements or have applied with relevant government departments for acquiring the necessary status. Potential applicants are invited to read carefully <i>Note 7 and Note 8 of the “Note to Respondents”</i> , and seek their own legal advice in deciding whom to sign the EoI reply form. |

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| Q3. | Can the respondent be a partnership or group of companies? |
| A3. | Yes. But the group of interested parties should designate one party to be the respondent which would be the <i>de facto</i> school sponsoring body/operator of the school to be operated at the VSP/school site and enter into tenancy agreement/land lease with the Government upon successful allocation. |
| Q4. | Can a private company partner with an overseas international school to express interest jointly? |
| A4. | Yes, please see Q3 above for reference. |
| Q5. | Is the exercise only restricted to existing school operators? |
| A5. | No. However, in selecting the most appropriate school operators for grant of the VSP/school sites, the proven experience and expertise of the respondent would be one of the factors to be considered. |
| Q6. | What are the basic requirements that a respondent has to meet before it would be invited to submit a detailed school proposal? |
| A6. | <p>The applicant organisation should commit to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) allocate at least 70% of the school places of the new school to non-local students; existing international schools in Hong Kong applied for expansion are required to allocate 70% of the school places of the entire school (i.e. all existing campus(es) as well as the new campus allocated in this exercise) to non-local students; (b) operate a non-local curriculum suitable for international schools; (c) operate a primary, secondary or primary-cum-secondary international school; (d) operate on a self-financing basis without any recurrent or capital financial assistance from the Government (apart from the interest-free loan which may be provided by the Government upon application to the school operator allocated with the site through signing a Private Treaty Grant with the Government for re-construction of a school building thereon); (e) carry out all the necessary technical assessments and measures at its own cost in connection with the use of the site; |

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| | <p>(f) set aside a sum not less than 10% of the annual total school fee income for the new international school/campus, for providing scholarship and/or financial assistance for deserving students;</p> <p>(g) obtain tax exemption status (by virtue of section. 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance for both the school sponsoring body (SSB) and the school, and obtain incorporation status (by virtue of the Companies Ordinance or other Ordinances) for the SSB and the new campus; and</p> <p>(h) make available the school campus for Government or community use.</p> <p>Please refer to <i>basic requirements 1(a) – (h) of the “Note to Respondents”</i> for details.</p> |
| Q7. | Are support letters from Consulate General(s) and/or Chamber(s) of Commerce mandatory? |
| A7. | No. Submission of letters of recommendation from Consulate General(s) and/or Chamber(s) of Commerce is <i>not</i> required for the expression of interest. Such letter(s) will only be required upon request of the Education Bureau at a later stage. Specifically, letter(s) of recommendation from relevant Consulate General(s) and/or Chamber(s) of Commerce would be required for the offer of any <i>national</i> curriculum which requires approval or certain certification from the respective national education authorities. |
| Q8. | Can international schools offer the “Mainland curriculum” as one of the non-local curricula? |
| A8. | No. The current exercise focuses on the provision of international school places to cater for the needs for other non-local curricula. Proposals offering local curriculum of HKSAR leading to Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination or curriculum adopted in the Mainland China leading to National Joint College Entrance Examination (NJCEE) would not be considered. For the avoidance of doubt, applicants may incorporate Chinese language or adopt Chinese as a medium of instruction in the proposed curriculum. |

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| Q9. | Why would the 70% requirement for admission of non-local students be applied to all campuses of an existing international school in Hong Kong, rather than to the new campus only? |
| A9. | It has been the HKSAR Government's commitment to developing a vibrant international school sector in meeting the demand for school places mainly from overseas families living in Hong Kong and families coming to Hong Kong for work or investment. The condition is aligned with the said policy objective. |
| Q10. | Is an existing international school in Hong Kong required to use its existing name at the new campus? |
| A10. | Yes, if the VSP/school site allocated is used for expansion of an existing international school (i.e. adding a new campus). But if the SSB/operator decides to set up a new international school, it would need to be registered with a name that can be <i>differentiated from</i> the existing school, and under a <i>new</i> school registration number. EDB reserves all rights in the acceptance/approval of any proposed name of the new school. |
| Q11. | Can an existing private school offering non-local curriculum in Hong Kong apply for expansion through this SAE? |
| A11. | Should existing private school operators be interested, they may express interest for setting up a new international school under this exercise as opposed to seeking for expansion. |
| Q12. | Why the successful applicants are given the development option of “demolishing and re-construct” this time? |
| A12. | Considering the age of the VSPs which were some 40 and 65 years respectively, we do not rule out the possibility that some school operators might wish to demolish the existing structures on the school site and re-construct a new school building having regard to their resources and other considerations. |

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| Q13. | What are the exact amount in Hong Kong dollars for (i) nominal rent; and (ii) nominal premium? | | | | |
| A13. | We offer nominal rent (for the development option of “rent and renovation”) or nominal premium (for the development option of “demolition and re-construction”) in this exercise. Nominal rent/premium is lower than market rent/premium, but the exact amount is subject to prevailing policy of the Government of the HKSAR. | | | | |
| Q14. | Are there any height restrictions for the new school buildings to be constructed? | | | | |
| A14. | <p>For Site 1, there is a height restriction of 8 storeys. As for Site 2, it is subject to a height restriction of 51 mPD, or the height of the existing school building, whichever is the greater.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above height restriction from the planning perspective, any school buildings so constructed have to meet all statutory requirements, including the any height requirements under the Education Regulations, Cap. 279A -</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="331 1205 1377 1496"> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1205 408 1249">7.</td> <td data-bbox="408 1205 1377 1249">Maximum height of schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="331 1249 408 1496"></td> <td data-bbox="408 1249 1377 1496">No part of any school premises, except the parapet wall round a roof playground, shall be situated at a height of more than 24 m above ground level; Provided that the Permanent Secretary, with the advice of the Director of Fire Services, may by notice in writing authorize that any part of such premises be situated at such height greater than 24 m as may be specified in the notice.</td> </tr> </table> | 7. | Maximum height of schools | | No part of any school premises, except the parapet wall round a roof playground, shall be situated at a height of more than 24 m above ground level; Provided that the Permanent Secretary, with the advice of the Director of Fire Services, may by notice in writing authorize that any part of such premises be situated at such height greater than 24 m as may be specified in the notice. |
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| Q15. | What is the timeframe for the current SAE? When will the SAE result be announced? | | | | |
| A15. | The EoI will end on 21 February 2024. Respondents, if found eligible, would be invited to submit detailed school proposals within around three months’ time during the next stage of the SAE. Visits to the VSP/school sites may also be arranged at that stage. Applications enclosing detailed school proposals would be scrutinised, assessed and considered by the bureau and the School Allocation Committee. Applicants might then be shortlisted for interview. Depending on the number of applications/detailed school | | | | |

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| | proposals received and the number of interviewees, we plan to announce the result of the SAE in 2025. |
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Infrastructure, International School and Statistics Division
Education Bureau
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