

EDUCATION BUREAU
CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 81/2026

From : Permanent Secretary for Education To : Supervisors and heads of government and aided primary schools (including special schools) and primary schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme

Ref. : EDB1146-2020-8030-9060-00001-P001

Date : 11 June 2026

**Provision of Free Lunch at Schools for Primary Students from
Low-income Families
2026/27 School Year**

Summary

This circular memorandum invites the application of whole-day government and aided primary schools (including special schools) and primary schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS primary schools) for funding under the programme of Free Lunch at Schools (“the Programme”) in the 2026/27 school year to provide free lunch at schools for primary students from low-income families.

Background

2. The Community Care Fund has launched the Programme since the 2011/12 school year on a pilot basis to provide free lunch at schools for students in receipt of full grant under the Student Financial Assistance Schemes (SFAS full-grant) in whole-day government, aided (including special schools) and DSS primary schools. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the Programme was incorporated into the Government’s regular assistance programme. It aims at providing free lunch at schools for primary students from low-income families so as to enable eligible students to have balanced and substantial meals at schools.

Details

Eligible Students

3. The funding will be disbursed to participating schools by the Education Bureau (EDB) directly. Participating schools should pay lunch expenses on behalf of Primary 1 to Primary 6 students meeting all of the following criteria:

- (i) receiving SFAS full-grant in the 2026/27 school year;
- (ii) studying in a whole-day government, aided (including special schools) or DSS primary school; and

(iii) having lunch arranged by the schools they attend¹.

4. As stated in paragraph 3 above, the criteria for being eligible students include receiving SFAS full-grant. Schools are therefore invited to remind parents to submit the Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Schemes at their earliest convenience so as to submit to the schools a copy of the “Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Schemes 2026/27 Notification of Result” or “2026/27 Eligibility Certificate (Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Students)” issued by the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency in a timely manner, thereby enabling schools to make payment for lunch expenses on behalf of eligible students having lunch arranged by the schools. Since it is a common practice for parents to make pre-payment for students’ lunch expenses, EDB encourages schools to liaise with their lunch suppliers on pre-payment and refund arrangements, and ensure parents are informed of the relevant details.

Lunch Arrangements

5. When considering lunch options, apart from ensuring that students are provided with healthy, balanced and substantial meals, schools should offer diversified food options for students to choose from in order to cater for different needs of individual students in terms of health, religious or cultural consideration, etc.

Disbursement and Accounting Arrangements

6. The funding of the Programme will be disbursed to participating schools in two instalments. The first instalment disbursed in late August 2026 is calculated based on the estimated number of students receiving SFAS full-grant of each participating school, the daily lunch expense per student and the number of days with school lunch arrangements as reported by the school in the application form. For the second instalment, EDB will make adjustment according to the latest number of students receiving SFAS full-grant in school and disburse the funding to aided and DSS primary schools in late December 2026. For government primary schools, the second instalment will be disbursed in late April 2027 to tie in with the prevailing accounting arrangements. Under special circumstances (such as a significant

¹ Schools have various modes of arranging lunch for students, e.g. selecting lunch suppliers for students through the tendering and procurement procedures, hiring staff to provide lunch for students, etc. Should students meeting the criteria stated in paragraphs 3(i) and (ii) bring their self-packed lunch to school, participating schools will not be provided with the funding for these students.

increase in the number of eligible students in the middle of the school year), schools should contact EDB as soon as possible for follow-up.

7. Participating schools should verify the balance of the funding received at the end of the school year and return the surplus to EDB. Surplus should not be carried forward to the next school year, while deficit will be made up by EDB. Detailed arrangements will be announced under separate cover in June 2027. For audit purpose, schools are required to keep the receipts which indicate the amount of expenditure, the number of beneficiary students, the lunch expenses and the number of days with school lunch arrangements.

8. The funding provided for the Programme serves a specific purpose and participating schools should prepare a separate ledger for it. Aided and DSS primary schools should observe the requirements as stipulated in relevant circular memorandums and their annexes calling for submission of audited annual accounts to EDB for scrutiny. For government primary schools, the funding will be disbursed in the form of budget allocation. The expenditure should be charged to a specified account and should not exceed the allocation in the respective financial years.

Related Issues

9. To help schools cope with the additional administrative and clerical work arising from the implementation of various initiatives, in particular work relating to poverty alleviation (including the Programme), EDB has provided an additional recurrent cash grant equivalent to the salary of a Clerical Assistant for public sector primary schools since the 2014/15 school year. For details, please refer to [EDB Circular No. 10/2014](#).

Application

10. Schools may complete and submit the electronic application form via the Common Log-On System (<https://clo.edb.gov.hk>) (Common Log-On System > e-Form Submission System > e-Forms Application > Application Form for Provision of Free Lunch at Schools for Primary Students from Low-income Families (EDB 217)). Schools may make use of the delegation function in the e-Form Submission System to delegate staff to assist in the application. Alternatively, schools may complete and return the attached application form by fax (fax no.: 3107 1306) or by post (address: Room 1141, 11/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong) to the Student Special Support Section of EDB. **Regardless of**

whether schools intend to participate in the Programme, they are required to submit the application form on or before 7 July 2026 to confirm their application intention.

Enquiries

11. For the latest information and frequently asked questions about the Programme, schools may visit the related EDB webpage via the link below or by scanning the QR code on the right (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/freelunch>).



12. For enquiries, please contact the Student Special Support Section of EDB at 2892 6656.

Cliff HUI
for Permanent Secretary for Education

Encl.

c.c. Heads of sections – for information

Application Form

(Please return the completed application form by fax or by post to the Student Special Support Section of EDB **on or before 7 July 2026**)

To: Student Special Support Section, EDB
Address: Room 1141, 11/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Fax No.: 3107 1306

Provision of Free Lunch at Schools for Primary Students from Low-income Families 2026/27 School Year

My school **will /will not*** participate in the programme of Free Lunch at Schools ("the Programme") (***please delete as appropriate**).

For participating schools, please complete Part A; for non-participating schools, please complete Part B.

Part A (Please put a ✓ in the appropriate box and fill in the required information.)

My school will duly inform parents of the details of the Programme and provide eligible students with free lunch at schools. The details of the lunch arrangement of my school are as follows:

- (1) My school will adopt the following mode of arranging lunch for students at school:
- (i) Selecting the lunch supplier through the existing tendering and procurement procedures.
 - (ii) Hiring staff to provide lunch for students.
 - (iii) Others (please specify: _____)

- (2) The price for each student lunch in the 2026/27 school year is as follows (if the lunch prices for different groups of students, such as junior/senior primary students, are different, please enter the respective prices; if there is only one lunch price, please fill in Price 1.):

Price 1 (target students: _____)) HKD

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | • | |
| | | • | |

Price 2 (target students: _____)) HKD

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | • | |
| | | • | |

(Please indicate the price stated in the contract with the lunch supplier or the price that parents are informed of under other modes of lunch arrangement.)

- (3) The estimated number of days with provision of free lunch at schools for students (the number of days with school lunch arrangements may be different from the number of school days):
- (i) from September to December 2026 (to March 2027 for government primary schools): _____ days; and
 - (ii) from January (from April 2027 for government primary schools) to July 2027: _____ days.

Part B

My school **will NOT** participate in the Programme. The reason is as follows:

Signature of Supervisor: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Name of School: _____

School Code:

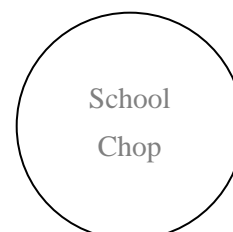
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Name of Teaching Staff-in-charge: _____

School Telephone No.: _____

School Email Address: _____

Date: _____



Personal Information Collection Statement

Purpose of Collection

1. The personal data provided by you in this form will be used by EDB for one or more of the following purposes:

- (a) Activities relating to the processing, authentication and counter-checking of the application for funding under the programme of Free Lunch at Schools;
- (b) Activities relating to matching of the personal data with the database of other relevant Government bureaux/departments in connection with the processing, authentication and counter-checking of the application mentioned in (a) above;
- (c) Activities relating to matching of the personal data within the database of EDB for purposes of verifying/updating records of EDB;
- (d) Activities relating to training and development including invitation of participation in programmes/activities, applications for reimbursement of course fees, assessment of nominations, awards and scholarship, and monitoring of attainment progress;
- (e) Activities relating to the processing and vetting of applications for, and disbursement of, funding/grants/subsidies, and conducting of audits;
- (f) Activities relating to compilation of statistics, research and Government publications; and
- (g) Activities relating to the administration and enforcement of rules and regulations including the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), its subsidiary legislation (such as the Education Regulations and the Grant/Subsidized Schools Provident Fund Rules) and the Codes of Aid.

2. The provision of personal data required by this form and during the processing of this form is obligatory. In the event that you do not provide those personal data, we may not be able to handle or further process the application.

Classes of Transferees

3. The personal data you provide will be made available to persons working in EDB. Apart from this, they may be transferred or disclosed to the parties or in the circumstances listed below:-

- (a) other Government bureaux and departments for the purposes mentioned in paragraph 1 above;
- (b) the school in which the form relates for the purposes mentioned in paragraph 1 above;
- (c) where you have given your prescribed consent to such disclosure; and
- (d) where such disclosure is authorised or required under the law or court order applicable to Hong Kong.

Access to Personal Data

4. You have the right to request access to and correction of your personal data held by EDB. Request for access or correction of personal data in this form should be made in writing to Executive Officer (Student Special Support)12 at Student Special Support Section, EDB, Room 1141, 11/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong or email to exoss12@edb.gov.hk.