

Preface

Recently there have been many outcries for changes and improvement in local education. Yet amidst these outcries, there remains an element which transcends time, social and economic change. This element is the desire for our youngsters to develop a sense of self-worth, self-discipline and respect for others. In a nutshell, there are few people who would not see the development of the whole person as central to our educational practices. No one would agree more that good school discipline is fundamental to achieving the above. It is against this background that we have developed a strategic vision – that our students would become self-disciplined and responsible youth.

This is a series of guidelines about student discipline and how schools can improve their effectiveness in this area of work. There are seven chapters. Together, they form a proposed framework on student discipline for schools. (Figure 1).

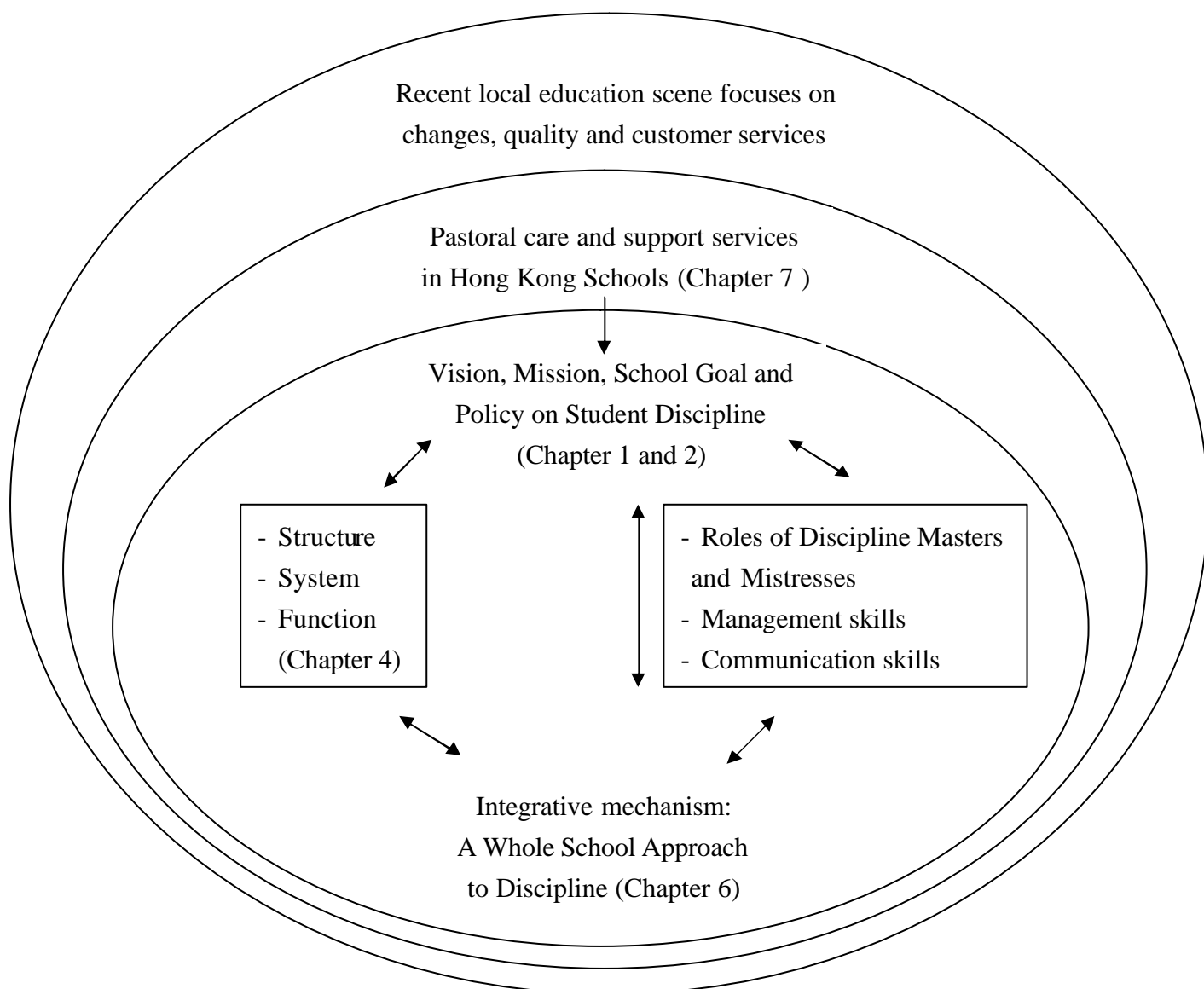


Figure 1: Student Discipline – A proposed framework for Hong Kong schools

Chapter 1 of the guidelines presents the background of the setting up of the Student Discipline Section and the purpose and approach of writing the guidelines. Chapter 2 is about the policy of the Department on student discipline. When individual schools set their school goals and establish a school policy on student discipline, they may like to refer to these chapters for reference.

In Chapter 3, we propose the role and the duties of the discipline master/mistress. The key role is to translate the vision, the policy and the objectives of the school into meaningful terms that the people in it can manage. The rest of the major duties include clarifying the missions of his/her functional team in student discipline, empowering his/her team members to innovate, improve and review their attitude and strategies according to the changing needs of the students, the school and the community.

In Chapter 4, we introduce the function and structure of the discipline team including the characteristics of an effective team and the working relationship between this team and other functional teams.

In Chapter 5, we elaborate, at a micro level and with case illustrations, discipline strategies and the seven success factors of an educative approach in dealing with student discipline.

Chapter 6 describes an integrative mechanism which links up the structure and systems of the school with teachers' management and communication skills. The Whole School Approach to Discipline aligns the teachers, the students and their parents to foster a self-motivated and self-directed team and works towards the common goal of promoting self-discipline and responsibility among young people in Hong Kong.

In preparing these guidelines, there is an abundance of ideas, information and materials from schools and professional people in the field. The heart of the matter is not to provide a foolproof programme for student discipline but develop a framework for schools to build on their experience for the crystallization of new values.