



## Chapter 16: Education

### **Hong Kong's education system**

The following is a general introduction to the system. If your immediate interest is in schooling for non-Chinese speaking children, please turn to the section below on *Education and support services for non-Chinese speaking children*.

#### ***Kindergartens***

All kindergartens are privately run. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Government has implemented the new kindergarten (KG) education scheme (Scheme) with an aim to provide good quality and highly affordable KG education, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs. Under the Scheme, KG student admission would continue to be at the discretion of individual KGs. Nonetheless, KGs are required to ensure equal opportunities in admission for all children regardless of their race, gender and ability. In light of the existing diverse operating modes of KGs, it is wise to shop around before making a choice.

#### ***Primary education***

Primary schooling starts at the age of around 6. There are three modes of operation namely AM, PM and whole-day. All eligible children are, on application, allocated Primary 1 places in government and aided primary schools through the Primary One Admission System. Chinese is the language of instruction in most schools with English taught as a second language.

#### ***Secondary education***

On completion of primary education, pupils are, on application, allocated subsidised Secondary 1 (S1) places in government and aided schools through the Secondary School Places Allocation System.

The senior secondary curriculum has been implemented since September 2009 in Secondary 4. All students can now benefit from 6 years of secondary education (i.e. 3 years of junior secondary and 3 years of senior secondary education) and

sit for only one public examination at the end of Secondary 6 - the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination.

### *International schools*

A total of 53 international schools, were operating in Hong Kong. These schools form an important part of Hong Kong's status as an international business centre and a vibrant cosmopolitan city. They offer different non-local curricula, including those of the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and others such as the International Baccalaureate programmes. Their students do not normally sit for local examinations.

### *Special education*

In the 2017/18 school year, there are 61 aided special schools providing education services for children with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, emotional and behavioural difficulties and intellectual disability, as well as hospitalised students. As for public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools, additional resources on top of regular subvention, professional support and teacher training are provided to help them cater for students with special educational needs. More information on special education is available on the Education Bureau (EDB) webpage at <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/policy/special/index.html>

## **Beyond the schools**

### *Higher education*

Hong Kong has 20 degree-awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded through the University Grants Committee (UGC), one is publicly-funded and the remaining eleven are self-financing.

For enquiries about higher education, the relevant information is set out below-

<b>UGC-funded Institutions</b>		
City University of Hong Kong	Tat Chee Avenue Kowloon Tong, Kowloon	3442-7654
Hong Kong Baptist University	Kowloon Tong, Kowloon	3411-7400

Lingnan University	8 Castle Peak Road Tuen Mun, NT	2616-8888
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Sha Tin, NT	3943-7000 3943-6000
The Education University of Hong Kong	10 Lo Ping Road Tai Po, NT	2948-8888
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hung Hom, Kowloon	2766-5111
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Clear Water Bay, Kowloon	2358-8888
The University of Hong Kong	Pokfulam, Hong Kong	2859-2111
<b>Publicly-funded Institution</b>		
Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts	1 Gloucester Road Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2584-8500
<b>Self-financing Institutions</b>		
Caritas Institute of Higher Education	18 Chui Ling Road Tseung Kwan O, NT	3653-6600
Centennial College	3 Wah Lam Path Pokfulam, Hong Kong	3762-6200
Chu Hai College of Higher Education	80 Castle Peak Road Castle Peak Bay, Tuen Mun, NT	2972-7200
Gratia Christian College	5 Wai Chi Street Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon, HKSAR	5804-4143
Hang Seng Management College	Hang Shin Link, Siu Lek Yuen Sha Tin, NT	3963-5555
HKCT Institute of Higher Education	2 On Shing Street, Ma On Shan Sha Tin, NT	2265-6993
Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education	325-329, Lai Chi Kok Road Shamshuipo, Kowloon	3996 1000 / 3996 1001
Hong Kong Shue Yan University	10 Wai Tsui Crescent Braemar Hill, North Point Hong Kong	2570-7110

The Open University of Hong Kong	30 Good Shepherd Street Homantin, Kowloon	2768-6205 / 2768-6656
Tung Wah College	No. 31 Wylie Road Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong	3190-6673
Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Vocational Training Council	(Tsing Yi Campus) 20A Tsing Yi Road, Tsing Yi Island, NT  (Chai Wan Campus) 133 Shing Tai Road, Chai Wan, HK	2176-1456  3890-8000
University Grants Committee Secretariat	7/F, Shui On Centre 6-8 Harbour Road Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2524-3987

### ***Adult education***

The EDB implements the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (FAEAEC) to provide financial assistance to eligible adult learners aged 17 or above attending evening secondary courses at designated centres.

### ***Diploma Yi Jin Programme***

The Diploma Yi Jin Programme provides an alternative pathway for secondary 6 school leavers as well as adult learners aged 21 or above to obtain a formal qualification to pursue employment and further study.

### ***Vocational and professional education and training***

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) offers a wide range of vocational and professional education and training programmes through its member institutions. All applicants, irrespective of their race or ethnic origin, who are able to meet the admission requirements, will be considered. The VTC mainly uses English as the medium of instruction, supplemented with Chinese if necessary, for its programmes of post-secondary 6 or above level. Where a programme requires Chinese Language qualification in HKDSE for admission, alternative Chinese Language qualifications such as HKDSE Applied Learning Chinese (for non-Chinese speaking students) and GCE/GCSE/IGCSE Chinese Language will be considered for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students. Hence, NCS students may apply according to their preference. Detailed information,

including the medium of instruction, of the vocational and professional education and training programmes suitable for secondary school graduates are available at VTC website: [www.vtc.edu.hk](http://www.vtc.edu.hk) under VTC Programmes.

## **Financial assistance for needy students**

The Government's policy on student finance is to ensure that no students will be denied access to education due to a lack of means. In support of this policy, the Student Finance Office (SFO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency administers the following financial assistance schemes for students from pre-primary to post-secondary levels:

### **Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS)**

- The KCFRS provides needy families with financial assistance in the form of fee remission for their children attending nursery, lower and upper classes in local non-profit-making kindergartens under the new kindergarten education scheme and/or children receiving whole-day child care services in child care centres.

### **Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students (Grant-KG)**

- The Grant-KG provides an additional grant to needy kindergarten students who meet the same eligibility criteria under the KCFRS to defray school-related expenses incurred from the students' kindergarten education.

### **School Textbook Assistance Scheme (STAS)**

- The STAS provides assistance to needy Primary 1 to Senior Secondary 3 / Secondary 6 students in government, aided, per caput grant schools and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme for covering the costs of essential textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses.

### **Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)**

- The STSS provides travel subsidies to needy students receiving formal primary or secondary education or attending a full-time day course up to first degree level in an acceptable institution, residing beyond a ten-minute walking distance from school and travelling to school by public transport.

### **Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges (SIA)**

- The SIA provides subsidies to needy families whose children are full-time students receiving education at primary or secondary level, or full-time students pursuing Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ) programmes or equivalent courses of the Vocational Training Council to meet the internet access charges for e-learning at home for their children. The subsidies are granted on a household basis. Eligible families will receive a flat-rate cash grant, regardless of the number of children in the family.

### **Tertiary Student Finance Scheme — Publicly-funded Programmes (TSFS)**

- The TSFS provides grants and/or loans to students pursuing recognized full-time University Grants Committee-funded or publicly-funded programmes at post-secondary level. Eligible students who have passed the income test and asset test are provided with grants to cover their tuition fees and academic expenses, and low-interest loans to meet their living expenses..

### **Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students (FASP)**

- The FASP provides assistance to students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes at sub-degree (i.e. associate degree or higher diploma) or degree level. Same as the TSFS, those who have passed the income test and asset test are provided with grants and loans to meet their tuition fees, academic expenses and living expenses..

### **Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Full-time Tertiary Students (NLSFT), Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Post-secondary Students (NLSPTS) and Extended Non-means-tested Loan Scheme(ENLS)**

- Post-secondary students who do not wish or fail to go through the means test under the TSFS or FASP may apply for the non-means-tested loans under the NLSFT or the NLSPTS respectively to cover their tuition fees. As for the ENLS, the scheme provides loans for eligible students pursuing specific post-secondary / continuing and professional education programmes in Hong Kong to meet tuition fees.

### **Tuition fee reimbursement under the DYJ Programme**

- The DYJ Programme provides financial assistance in the form of tuition fee reimbursements to eligible students pursuing the DYJ on a full-time or part-time basis. Eligible students may be reimbursed 30% of the tuition fees paid. They may be reimbursed 50% or 100% of the tuition fees paid if they have passed the means test.

### **Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (FAEAEC)**

- The FAEAEC provides financial assistance in the form of tuition fee reimbursement to eligible students. Eligible students may be reimbursed 30% of the tuition fees paid. They may be reimbursed 50% or 100% of the tuition fees paid if they have passed the means test.

### **Information Leaflets in EM Languages**

SFO has translated the information leaflet on various financial assistance schemes, introducing the scheme details, eligibility criteria and application procedures, for students from pre-primary to secondary level into seven ethnic minorities (EM) languages, namely, Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Punjabi (Indian). In addition, sample household application form with explanatory notes (sample form) which provides guidance on completion of the household application form for student financial assistance schemes is also translated into the seven EM languages. Hard copies of the information leaflets and sample forms are available at SFO, kindergartens and child care centres, primary and secondary schools, the Regional Education Offices of the Education Bureau, the District Offices of the Home Affairs Department, the District Social Welfare Offices of the Social Welfare Department, the Maternal and Child Health Centres of the Department of Health as well as various support services centres for EMs for distribution to needy EM parents. The information leaflets and sample forms can also be downloaded from SFO's website ([www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo](http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo)).

Enquiries can be made to SFO at **2802 2345**.

### **Education and support services for non-Chinese speaking children**

The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting the early integration of NCS students with right of abode in Hong Kong into the

community including facilitating their adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. With the well-being of NCS students in mind, various educational support measures have been put in place and synchronised in a coherent manner in recent years. Education and support services are provided for newly arrived NCS children to help them adjust to the local education system and also for NCS children studying in public sector schools (which refer to government, aided and caput schools) and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools to meet their learning needs.

To enhance the outreach of the education and support services to NCS students and their parents, EDB has published various information leaflets in English, Chinese and six major ethnic minority languages (Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai and Urdu) and a parent information package entitled “Non-Chinese Speaking Parent Information Package: Your Guide to Education in Hong Kong”, comprising a guidebook and a related DVD to introduce local school system, major education policies and related education services with versions in major ethnic minority languages. The information leaflets and parent information package are available on the EDB website at [www.edb.gov.hk/ncs](http://www.edb.gov.hk/ncs).

EDB has progressively put in place a series of support measures since the 2006/07 school year to facilitate NCS students’ early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. EDB has, starting from the 2014/15 school year, allocated about \$200 million per year to step up the education support for NCS students in learning the Chinese language through, among others, the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) in primary and secondary schools and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools. Developed from the perspective of second language learners, the “Learning Framework” aims to help NCS students overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese as a second language with a view to enabling them to bridge over to mainstream Chinese Language classes. Besides, starting from the 2014/15 school year, Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) (ApL(C)) has been introduced at the senior secondary levels to provide NCS students with an additional channel to acquire an alternative recognised qualification to prepare them for further studies and career pursuits. ApL(C) is accepted as an alternative qualification in Chinese Language for admission to University Grants Committee-funded institution and most post-secondary institutions, as well as appointments to relevant civil service ranks. In tandem, schools admitting 10 or more NCS students have been provided with an additional



funding to facilitate their implementation of the “Learning Framework” and creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools. Schools receiving the additional funding adopt diversified intensive learning and teaching modes like pull-out teaching, split-class/group learning, after-school consolidation, etc., to help NCS students’ learn the Chinese language systematically, ensure equal opportunities for them to learn Chinese on par with their Chinese-speaking counterparts and strengthen communication with parents of NCS students whereby NCS students’ Chinese learning would be better supported through home-school cooperation. Associated professional support including teachers’ professional development programmes on teaching Chinese as a second language for Chinese Language teachers, and enhanced school-based professional support to primary and secondary schools as well as kindergartens admitting NCS students are also provided to schools.

To further support NCS students, particularly those who have a late start in learning of Chinese Language, EDB has commissioned a tertiary institution to operate Chinese Language Learning Support Centre since April 2007 to offer them support programmes after school hours, at weekends and during school holidays. The number of venues for the Centre has been increased from 5 in the 2007/08 school year to 19 in the 2017/18 school year. A part from running support programmes, the Centres have helped develop relevant teaching resources and organise workshops for teachers of which the details can be found on the EDB website.

A Summer Bridging Programme for NCS students which aims to facilitate NCS primary 1 entrants’ adaptation to classroom setting with the use of Chinese has been introduced since 2004. It has been extended to cover NCS students progressing to Primary 2, 3 and 4 to help them consolidate the Chinese learning at Key Stage 1 for bridging over to Key Stage 2 since 2007. Starting from 2013, the Programme has been expanded to allow parents of participating NCS students to join with a view to facilitating a more effective learning of Chinese with parent support and through home-school cooperation.

Starting from 2008, the University-Grants-Committee-funded institutions have provided further flexibility for acceptance of alternative Chinese Language qualifications including those under the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) under specified circumstances for application under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.

Eligible NCS school candidates are subsidised to sit for the Chinese examinations under GCSE, IGCSE and GCE. The examination fees of these examinations will be on par with that of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (Chinese Language) Examination. In addition, eligible needy NCS students may also be granted full or half remission of the subsidised examination fees.

## Placement service

The Government is also committed to providing nine-year free universal basic education to all eligible children including non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children. Under the existing policy, all parents must send their children (aged 6-15) who have the right of abode in Hong Kong to attend schools. Starting from the 2008/09 school year, free education is extended to include senior secondary education provided by public sector secondary schools.

NCS children are encouraged to study in public sector schools so that they could integrate into the community as early as possible. All public sector schools can admit eligible NCS children. Children holding one of the following documents are eligible for public sector school places -

- (a) *Hong Kong Birth Certificate*
  - (i) For birth registration effected on or after 1 July 1987, column 12 or 11 of their birth certificates must indicate their Hong Kong permanent resident status as “Established”;
  - (ii) Persons whose Hong Kong belonger status or Hong Kong permanent resident status is shown as “Not established” in the birth certificate should have a Permit to Remain in Hong Kong - ID 235B or valid travel documents, with one of the endorsements or landing slips if applicable, listed in (c) below.
  
- (b) *Hong Kong Identity Card*

A Hong Kong identity card issued on or after 23 June 2003 which does not bear the symbol “C” (for conditional stay) at the line below the date of birth of the holder. If the symbol “C” is shown, the holder must have a valid travel document with one of the endorsements or landing slips if applicable, listed in (c) below.

(c) *Travel Document*

A valid travel document with any of the following endorsements, or landing slips if applicable:

- (i) “Holder’s eligibility for Hong Kong permanent identity card verified.”;
- (ii) “The holder of this travel document has the right to land in Hong Kong. (Section 2AAA, Immigration Ordinance, Cap. 115, Laws of Hong Kong.)”;
- (iii) “Previous conditions of stay are hereby cancelled”;
- (iv) Permitted to stay unconditionally;
- (v) “Permitted to remain until (date\*)”;
- (vi) “Permitted to remain until (date\*) Employment is not permitted”;
- (vii) “Permission to remain extended until (date\*)”;
- (viii) “Permission to remain extended until (date\*) Employment is not permitted”;
- (ix) “Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date\*)”;
- (x) “Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals - Permission to remain extended until (date\*)”.

*Remarks\*: the date showing the limit of stay in Hong Kong is still valid at the time of admission to school.*

Parents can approach schools with vacancies direct for admission, or they can approach the Regional Education Offices for assistance in seeking school places. Contact details are as follows -

Hong Kong Regional Education Office 3/F, Cityplaza 3, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Hong Kong	2863-4646
Kowloon Regional Education Office Podium-1/F, East Block, EDB Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon	3698-4108
New Territories West Regional Education Office 19/F, Chinachem Tsuen Wan Plaza 457 Castle Peak Road, NT	2437-7272
New Territories East Regional Education Office 22/F, Landmark North, 39 Lung Sum Ave Sheung Shui, NT	2639-4876

Parents can obtain information of various types of schools from the website of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation, at [www.chsc.hk/eng](http://www.chsc.hk/eng) and from the websites of individual schools, which can be found from the District School Lists ([www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/sch-info/sch-search/schlist-by-district/index.html](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/sch-info/sch-search/schlist-by-district/index.html)).

## **Support services**

Newly arrived children (including newly arrived NCS children) can choose to enrol in the Initiation Programme prior to their entry to mainstream schools. For those newly arrived children who choose to study in mainstream schools directly upon their arrival, the Education Bureau (EDB) invites non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to run the Induction Programme for them. In addition, EDB also provides public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) that admit these students with the School-based Support Scheme Grant to run school-based support programmes for them. Details of these three types of support services are as follows:

### ***Initiation programme***

The full-time six-month Initiation Programme is an integrated programme provided as an alternative mode of support services for the children just arriving Hong Kong. The children can choose to attend this programme prior to their joining to mainstream schools. The objectives of the Programme are to provide them with learning experience in local classroom context, to enhance their standards in English and Chinese and to foster their personal development and social adaptation. The EDB undertakes to place the children completing the Programme to suitable primary or secondary schools.

Enquiries: **2892 6190**

### ***Induction programme***

The Induction Programme is a part-time 60-hour programme run by NGOs with subvention from the Government. The objectives of the Programme are to help the newly arrived children adapt to the local environment and education system. Contents of the Programme include learning of Chinese and English, personal development, social adaptation and basic learning skills. The Programme may be operated during daytime or evening of weekdays, weekends or holidays, at the discretion of NGOs and depending on the needs of the children.

Newly arrived NCS children, aged 6 to 18, who choose to enter mainstream schools direct can also attend the programme free of charge in parallel.

Enquiries: **2892 6190**

### ***School-Based Support Scheme (SBSS) Grant***

The EDB provides the SBSS grant to public sector schools and DSS schools that admit newly arrived NCS children. Schools can flexibly make use of the grant to provide support services (e.g. supplementary language classes) for meeting the learning and adaptation needs of the children.

### **Enquiries**

Information on education and support services is available at the EDB webpage, [www.edb.gov.hk/ncs](http://www.edb.gov.hk/ncs), [www.edb.gov.hk/nac-e](http://www.edb.gov.hk/nac-e) and from the EDB Hotline (**2891-0088**).

