



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 (NCS) children, please turn to the section below on *Education and support services for NCS children*.

Kindergartens

All kindergartens are privately run. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Government has implemented the Kindergarten Education Scheme (the Scheme) with an aim to provide good quality and highly affordable kindergarten education, and enhance the accessibility of students to different modes of services that suit their specific needs. Under the Scheme, kindergarten student admission remains a school-based matter. Nonetheless, kindergartens are required to ensure equal opportunities in admission for all children regardless of their race, gender and ability.

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. Public sector primary schools generally teach in Chinese.

Secondary education

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

Secondary education comprises three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination.

International schools

Hong Kong has 54 international schools (including 1 special school) in operation. 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 Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as the International Baccalaureate programme. Their students do not normally sit for local examinations.

Special education

In the 2023/24 school year, there are 62 aided special schools providing education services for students with more severe or multiple disabilities including those with intellectual disability, physical disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment and moderate to severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as hospitalised students. As for public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools, additional resources, professional support and teacher training are provided on top of regular subvention to help them cater for students with special educational needs. Each public sector ordinary school is provided with a special educational needs coordinator to lead the student support team to promote integrated education. More information on special education is available on the SENSE website of the Education Bureau (EDB) at <https://sense.edb.gov.hk/en/index.html>

Beyond the schools

Higher education

Hong Kong has 22 degree-awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded through the University Grants Committee (UGC), one is publicly-funded and the remaining thirteen are self-financing.

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

UGC-funded Universities		
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
Publicly-funded Institution		
Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts	1 Gloucester Road Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2584-8500
Self-financing Institutions		
Centennial College	3 Wah Lam Path Pokfulam, Hong Kong	3762-6200
Gratia Christian College	5 Wai Chi Street Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon, HKSAR	5804-4143
The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong	Hang Shin Link Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin, NT	3963-5000
Hong Kong Chu Hai College	80 Castle Peak Road Castle Peak Bay, Tuen Mun, NT	2972-7200 / 2972-7374
HKCT Institute of Higher Education	2 On Shing Street, Ma On Shan Sha Tin, NT	2926-1222
Hong Kong Metropolitan University	30 Good Shepherd Street Homantin, Kowloon	2711-2100
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

Saint Francis University	2 Chui Ling Lane Tseung Kwan O, NT	3702-4388
Tung Wah College	No. 31 Wylie Road Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong	3190-6678
UOW College Hong Kong	1/F, Le Billionnaire 46 Sa Po Road Kowloon City, Hong Kong	2707-4669
Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education	2 Tin Wan Hill Road Tin Wan, Aberdeen, Hong Kong	3977-9877
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
UGC 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 of Applied Education (DAE) Programme

The DAE 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 HKDSE Chinese Language qualifications for admission, alternative Chinese Language qualifications such as HKDSE Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) and GCE/GCSE/IGCSE Chinese Language will be considered for NCS students. Hence, NCS students may apply vocational and professional education and training according to their preference. Detailed information, including the medium of instruction, of the vocational and professional education and training programmes suitable for secondary school leavers are available at VTC website: 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 (WFSFAA) 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 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 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 attending primary or secondary school or a full-time day course up to first degree level in a

recognised institution, residing more than 10 minutes' walking distance away from their schools; and who need to travel 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 of Applied Education (DAE) 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 assistance to students pursuing recognised full-time University Grants Committee-funded or other publicly-funded programmes at tertiary level. Eligible students who have passed the two-tier means 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 bachelor's degree level. Same as the TSFS, eligible students who have passed the means test are provided with grants to cover their tuition fees and academic expenses, and low-interest loans to meet their living expenses.

Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Full-time Tertiary Students (NLSFT), Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Post-secondary Students (NLSPS) 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 NLSPS 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.

Diploma of Applied Education (DAE) / Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ) Tuition Fee Reimbursement

This Scheme provides financial assistance in the form of tuition fee reimbursements to eligible students pursuing DAE / 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)

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Information Leaflets in Languages of Different Races

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 eight languages of different races, namely, Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, Punjabi and Vietnamese. 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 eight 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 EDB, the District Offices of the Home Affairs Department, the District Social Welfare Offices of the Social Welfare Department as well as various support service centres for Ethnic Minorities for distribution to needy parents. The information leaflets and sample forms can also be downloaded from WFSFAA's website (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk).

Enquiries can be made to SFO at 2802 2345.

Education and support services for NCS children

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

including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. 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. The EDB has been providing NCS students with all-encompassing learning support from pre-primary to secondary levels through diverse strategies to help them master the Chinese language and integrate into the community.

To enhance the outreach of the education and support services to NCS students and their parents, the EDB has published various information leaflets in English, Chinese and languages of different races (such as Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Urdu and Vietnamese) 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 the local school system, major education policies and related education services with versions in English, Chinese and languages of different races. The information leaflets and parent information package are also available on the EDB webpage (www.edb.gov.hk/ncs).

In addition, the EDB continually provides schools with learning and teaching resources, teacher training and professional support to further enhance the support for NCS students’ learning of the Chinese language, including the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) that aims to help teachers teach NCS students the Chinese language in primary and secondary schools. To facilitate schools’ implementation of the Learning Framework and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, all public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools offering the local curriculum are provided with an additional funding according to the number of NCS students admitted. The amount of the additional subsidy ranges from about \$0.15 million to about \$1.5 million per year. Besides, starting from the 2014/15 school year, Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) (ApL(C)) has been introduced at the senior secondary level 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 UGC-funded universities and most post-secondary institutions, as well as appointments to relevant civil service ranks. Diversified professional support measures including teachers’ professional

development programmes on teaching Chinese as a second language for Chinese Language teachers, and school-based professional support to primary and secondary schools as well as kindergartens admitting NCS students are also provided to schools.

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 prepare for Chinese learning in the following year since 2007. To strengthen the support for NCS students, the Programme has been undergone further expansion since 2013, which engages parents of participating NCS students for more effective learning of Chinese through parental support and home-school co-operation. From 2023 onwards, the EDB has extended the Programme to cover NCS students progressing to Primary 5 and 6 to provide more comprehensive and continuous Chinese learning support for NCS students.

At present, for NCS applicants who meet the specified circumstances, the participating institutions of the Joint University Programmes Admissions System and other post-secondary institutions accept 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) for the purpose of satisfying the entrance requirement in respect of Chinese Language. Besides, ApL(C) of the HKDSE (Category B) is accepted.

To help NCS students attain these qualifications, the EDB subsidises eligible NCS school candidates to enter for internationally recognised alternative Chinese Language examinations, including those under GCSE, IGCSE and GCE for admission to UGC-funded universities and post-secondary institutions. Subsidised school candidates are only required to pay a “subsidised examination fee” on par with the examination fee for the HKDSE (Chinese Language). In addition, eligible needy NCS students can also apply for full or half fee remission of the “subsidised examination fee”.

Placement service

It is the Government's policy to provide 12-year free primary and secondary education in public sector schools of which universal basic education for children aged between 6 and 15 is compulsory. 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.

NCS children are encouraged to study in schools with an immersed Chinese language environment as early as possible to facilitate their integration into the community and mastery of the Chinese language. All public sector schools can admit eligible NCS children. Persons 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 permanent resident status is shown as “*Not established*” in the birth certificate should have a Permit to Remain in Hong Kong - ID 235B ^{Note} or valid travel documents, with one of the endorsements or landing slips if applicable, listed in (c) below.

Note: Under the new non-stamping arrangement, a label bearing the imposed condition of stay in respect of the child will be printed and affixed onto the ID235B in lieu of stamping with effect from 6 January 2017.

- (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) “General Employment Policy (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (x) “Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xi) “Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xii) “Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xiii) “Technology Talent Admission Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xiv) “Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xv) “Top Talent Pass Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xvi) “Previous conditions of stay are hereby varied - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xvii) “Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xviii) “Technology Talent Admission Scheme - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;
- (xix) “Top Talent Pass Scheme - 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, Taikoo Shing 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, Tsuen Wan, N.T.	2437-7272
New Territories East Regional Education Office 22/F, Landmark North, 39 Lung Sum Avenue Sheung Shui, N.T.	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 and from the websites of individual schools, which can be found from the District School Lists (<https://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 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 programmes/grant are as follows:

Initiation programme

The six-month full-time 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 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, www.edb.gov.hk/nac-e and from the EDB Hotline (**2891-0088**).