

1 September 2025

Education Bureau Circular No. 19/2025
Reporting Mechanism for Absentees in Kindergartens

[Note : This circular should be read by -

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of Kindergartens, Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres and Schools with Kindergarten Classes - for action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections - for information.]

Summary

This circular informs all kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes (collectively referred to as “KGs” hereafter) of the arrangements for reporting to the Education Bureau (EDB) on KG students’ absence without reasons or under doubtful circumstances. Schools are requested to bring the content of this circular to the attention of all school personnel. This circular supersedes EDB Circular No. 4/2018 on “Reporting Mechanism for Absentees in Kindergartens”.

Details

Purpose

2. The Government attaches great importance to the well-being of children and firmly believes that every child should be protected against harm and abuse. Should a KG suspect any child abuse case, it should follow up according to the principles and procedures for handling suspected child abuse case and seek assistance from the Social Welfare Department (SWD), EDB or the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) as soon as practicable. The Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance (the Ordinance) will commence on 20 January 2026, specified professionals¹ of the social welfare, education and medical sectors are mandated to report serious child abuse cases so as to create a wide and effective protection

¹ Specified professionals in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and Youth College of Vocational Training Council include:

- principals, vice principals and teachers;
- professionals such as social workers, educational psychologists, speech therapists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, audiologists;
- child care workers or supervisors; and
- wardens of boarding schools.

(See Schedule 1 of the Ordinance for details)

web for children. To raise the alertness of school personnel and support KGs in early identification of students in need of support or suspected child abuse cases so that early intervention and appropriate support and services can be timely provided, this circular delineates the arrangements for KGs to report students' absence without reasons or under doubtful circumstances.

3. The existing arrangements on Reporting Mechanism for Absentees in Kindergartens which have been implemented since 15 March 2018 will continue to be used under which KGs must report to EDB on students' absence for seven consecutive school days without reasons or under doubtful circumstances. Details are set out in paragraphs 4 to 10 below.

Principles

4. The mechanism for reporting absentees in KGs is premised on caring about the safety and health of young children. If there are any suspected child abuse cases, irrespective of the number of days of absence of the case, schools should refer to the identification and handling procedures in the "Protecting Children from Maltreatment – Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Cooperation" ("Child Protection Guide") drawn up by the SWD, in collaboration with the relevant Government Bureaux/ Departments, non-governmental organisations and relevant professionals in carrying out prompt suitable actions and seek assistance from SWD, EDB and the Police. According to the requirements of the Ordinance, specified professionals of the school have statutory obligations to report suspected serious child abuse cases, details are set out in paragraph 7 below. On the other hand, as KG students are young, parents apply for leave for their children more often due to various considerations. If the situation is not doubtful, the school may handle in accordance with their prevailing school-based arrangements. Only if the students are absent without reason or under doubtful circumstances, KGs should report to EDB. Besides, KGs should put in place effective mechanism, procedures and contingency plans in advance for handling crisis, so that the mechanism could be activated immediately to facilitate professional judgment and decision, and in seeking support as appropriate.

5. Early identification and intervention can effectively prevent problems from deteriorating. Should there be students and/or their parents in need of support (such as inadequate care and improper parenting), even if it is not a case of suspected child abuse, subject to parents' consent to receive social services, schools may refer the children and their families to the Integrated Family Services Centre (IFSC) or Integrated Services Centre (ISC)² for assistance and support as appropriate (e.g. training on parenting skills).

² The addresses and contact phone numbers of IFSC /ISC are available on SWD website below:
[https://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/260/en/SWD & Subvented NGOs IFSCs ISCs address eng May 2023.pdf](https://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/260/en/SWD_%20Subvented%20NGOs%20IFSCs%20ISCs%20address%20eng%20May%202023.pdf)

Procedures

6. If any KG student is absent (regardless of the days of absence) without any form of notification from parents/guardians (collectively referred to as “parents”)³, the school should take initiative to contact the parents on the same day to express concern about the students, understand the reasons of absence, and handle according to the relevant circulars/guidelines issued by EDB / SWD from time to time, including first considering whether the family is in need of services from IFSC/ISC, and if necessary, introduce the services to parents and make referral.

7. Even if a student is absent for less than seven school days, or even attending school as usual, or absent intermittently, should the school personnel notice any wounds or any signs of child abuse, it should be handled immediately and follow the Ordinance and make reference to documents including the “Guide for Mandated Reporters”, EDBC No. 15/2025, and SWD’s “Child Protection Guide”. To fulfill the statutory obligations, if it comes to the notice of the specified professionals of the school that they have a reasonable ground to suspect that a child is suffering or is at real risk of suffering serious harm⁴ during the course of his or her work, they must make a report to an Authority (i.e. SWD or the Police) in accordance with Chapter 3 of the “Guide for Mandated Reporters” as soon as practicable. In addition, schools should complete the “Report Form of Student Absentee in Kindergarten” (**Appendix 1**) (hereafter “Report Form”) as appropriate for reporting to the respective School Development Section / Joint Office for KGs and Child Care Centres (Joint Office). In this connection, KGs are requested to note the following:

- (a) If the student and/or the family is receiving case services from SWD or service unit of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), the KG should report the case immediately to the responsible social worker for follow-up. In case of doubt or failing to reach the social worker, the KG may contact the Supervisor of the service unit or the Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU) of SWD.
- (b) If the student and/or the family is not receiving case services from SWD or service unit of NGO, the KG should report the case immediately to FCPSU of SWD.

8. If a student is absent for seven consecutive school days without reason or under doubtful circumstances, the school should complete the Report Form on the 7th day of the student’s absence, and send it to the respective School Development Section / Joint Office for reporting.

9. When completing the Report Form, schools should make reference to the student’s

³ KGs should confirm with parents on the recognised parent/guardian in applying leave for students.

⁴ The elements constituting “serious harm” are listed in Schedule 2 of the Ordinance.

daily behaviour and performance, as well as the situation of teachers' daily contact with the parents. Upon receiving the Report Form, the respective School Development Section / Joint Office will contact the school for details and, taking into account the situation of individual student and family, remind the school to handle the case according to the EDB circular (or guidelines) and SWD's "Child Protection Guide", and discuss with the school how to handle the case, including approaching the respective FCPSU of SWD for professional advice or support.

10. KGs should continue to liaise with relevant departments after submitting the Report Form, and follow up on the latest development. The school is required to report the progress of follow-up by completing **Appendix 2** in seven working days after submission of the Report Form.

11. As regards the mechanism of reporting students' absence for an entire month by KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme, its function is different from the above-mentioned mechanism for reporting KG students' absence without reasons or under doubtful circumstances. The former serves to confirm whether subsidy for the students concerned should be released for that month, while the latter serves to help KGs identify students in need of support or suspected cases of child abuse. Therefore, if KG students are absent without reason or under doubtful circumstances, KGs should report to EDB according to this circular.

Enquiries

12. For enquiries, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officers / Senior Services Officers.

Ms H Y NG
for Permanent Secretary for Education

Appendix 1

To: Education Bureau (EDB) (Fax no.: _____)
[Attn : Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres (Joint Office) /
_____ District School Development Section]

[Note: As this document contains personal data, please contact the staff of respective School Development Section / Joint Office in advance before sending the Report Form by fax.]

Report Form of Student Absentee in Kindergarten

School Name: _____

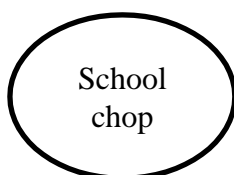
Name of student:		Class:	
Date of birth:	____/____/____(dd/mm/yyyy)	Gender:	(boy/girl)
Period of absence:	from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____(day/month/year) (a total of ____ school days)		
Any siblings attending the same school (or same organisation if known):	(please specify if yes)		
Reasons for absence given by parents/guardians			

As far as the school understands, the student and/or the family is currently not receiving case service from Social Welfare Department (SWD) or service unit of non-governmental-organisation (NGO) (see Note 1)

Areas in doubt or areas of concern (Note 2): (please put a ✓ in the appropriate box(es), and/or specify)	Action taken by school: (please put a ✓ in the appropriate box(es), and/or specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> parent has NOT notified the school about the student's leave Concern about: <input type="checkbox"/> student's body <input type="checkbox"/> student's behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> student's emotion <input type="checkbox"/> parent's behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> parent's attitude/emotion <input type="checkbox"/> student's interaction with parent <input type="checkbox"/> home environment (please specify the observations) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> unable to reach the parent/ contact person(s) assigned by the parent <input type="checkbox"/> has reached the parent /contact person(s), but their responses are unusual (Please specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> has sent the student for medical examination /treatment <input type="checkbox"/> has consulted SWD/NGO (Service unit & contact point: _____) for professional support <input type="checkbox"/> has reported to the Police <input type="checkbox"/> Others : _____

Note 1: If the student is a known case currently handled by Family and Child Protective Services Unit of Social Welfare Department (SWD) or Integrated Family Services Centre / Integrated Services Centre under SWD or NGO (e.g. bearing a case number under SWD/NGO and is followed up by designated professionals), it is not necessary to report the absence to EDB.

Note 2: Please refer to Chapter 4 on "Symptoms of Abused Child" in the "Protecting Children from Maltreatment – Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Co-operation" drawn up by the SWD and different relevant professionals.



Signature of Principal : _____
Name of Principal : _____
Telephone Number : _____
Date : _____

To: Education Bureau (Fax no.: _____)
[Attn : Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres (Joint Office) /
_____ District School Development Section]

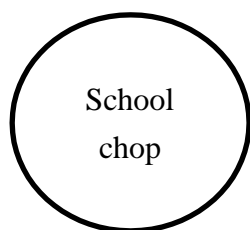
Follow-up to
the Reported Case of Student Absentee in Kindergarten

Subsequent to our reporting of the absence of _____ (name of student) of
_____ (class) of _____ (name of school) without reason or under
doubtful circumstances to the Education Bureau on (Date) _____:

I would like to report our school's follow-up to the absentee case as follows:

- The case has been followed up by Integrated Family Services Centre / Integrated Services Centre / Family and Child Protective Services Unit* of the Social Welfare Department/(for non-government-organisation, please provide the name: _____)
- The Social Welfare Department has given advice, and our school will continue to follow up.
- The student has already resumed schooling, nothing unusual is found.
- Others (please specify)

(*Please delete as appropriate)



Signature of Principal : _____
Name of Principal : _____
Phone Number : _____
Date : _____