

15 August 2013

## **Education Bureau Circular No. 14/2013**

### **Primary One Admission System Revised Arrangements for Central Allocation**

(Note: This circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors and heads of all kindergartens, government primary schools, aided primary schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme primary schools and private primary schools – for necessary action; and
- (b) Supervisors and heads of all secondary schools and sections – for information.)

#### **Summary**

This circular informs kindergartens<sup>1</sup> and primary schools of the revised arrangements, starting from Primary One Admission (POA) 2014 (i.e. for admission to Primary 1 (P1) in September 2014), for applicant children residing in the Mainland and intending to commute daily to schools in Hong Kong<sup>2</sup>. In brief, the arrangements for applicant children residing in the School Net under the POA System (POA School Net) will remain unchanged. Regarding applicant children residing in the Mainland, the arrangements for the Discretionary Places Admission stage and Part A of the Central Allocation stage under the POA System will also remain unchanged. Nonetheless, parents of applicant children residing in the Mainland are not required to choose any school net as the applicant child's POA School Net for participation in Part B of the Central Allocation stage. The Education Bureau (EDB) will provide applicant

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<sup>1</sup> Kindergartens refer to kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes.

<sup>2</sup> Cross-boundary students include children of Hong Kong residents living in Shenzhen, Type I babies (born to Mainland women in Hong Kong and whose fathers are permanent residents of Hong Kong) and Type II babies (born to Mainland women and whose fathers are non-permanent residents of Hong Kong).

children residing in the Mainland with a separate Choice of Schools List for the Central Allocation with more school choices for parents. This circular should be read in conjunction with the EDB Circular No. 9/2004 on Primary One Admission (POA) System issued on 2 July 2004.

## **Details**

### **Brief Descriptions of the Current POA System**

2. Applicant children who meet all the following requirements are eligible to participate in the POA:

- (i) being Hong Kong residents;
- (ii) reach the age of 5 years 8 months in September of the enrolling year;
- (iii) not attending any primary schools; and
- (iv) have never been allocated a P1 place under the POA System.

3. The POA System is divided into two stages: the Discretionary Places Admission stage and Central Allocation stage. During the stage of Discretionary Places Admission, all parents may submit their application to any public sector primary schools. The EDB will arrange central allocation for children who have not been offered a discretionary place. The Central Allocation stage is composed of two parts, viz. Part A - Unrestricted School Choices and Part B - Restricted School Choices. For Part A, parents of applicant children may choose a maximum of three primary schools from any school nets. As regards Part B, the 18 districts in the territory are divided into 36 POA School Nets. Parents will make school choices according to the Choice of Schools List of their POA School Net to which the applicant children's residential address belongs in order of preference for allocation of school places through a computer system. Details of the prevailing POA System are set out in the EDB Circular No. 9/2004 on Primary One Admission (POA) System issued on 2 July 2004.

4. In the past few years, applicant children residing in the Mainland chose one of the eight school nets close to the boundary control points as their POA School Net for participation in Part B - Restricted School Choices of the Central Allocation. The eight POA School Nets were Tuen Mun: 70 (Tuen Mun West), 71 (Tuen Mun East); Yuen Long: 72 (Tin Shui Wai), 74 (Yuen Long East); the North District: 80 (Sheung Shui), 81 (Fanling), 83 (Sha Tau Kok); and Tai Po: 84.

## **Major Concern**

5. Applicant children residing in the Mainland having met the requirements mentioned in paragraph 2 are eligible for participation in the POA. An upsurge of applicant children residing in the Mainland with propensity of choosing school nets of the North District as their POA School Net for participation in Part B of the Central Allocation in recent years has led to a shortfall of P1 places in the North District. On one hand, some teachers have concern over having more students in a class. On the other hand, parents of applicant children residing in the school nets / district concerned hope that the possible impact on their children's chances of being allocated a school place there can be relieved.

## **Revised Arrangements Starting from 2014**

6. In light of the situation mentioned in paragraph 5 and views of stakeholders, the EDB has adopted the following guiding principles to revise the arrangements for applicant children residing in the Mainland under the POA System and draw up the implementation details:

- (i) Commuting daily from the Mainland to schools in Hong Kong will impose pressure on children both mentally and physically. This is not conducive to students' learning effectiveness and home-school cooperation. The EDB will continue to remind parents to consider carefully before deciding to arrange their children residing in the Mainland to participate in the POA and commute daily to schools in Hong Kong. They should also understand the situation of the boundary control points and avoid choosing schools adjacent to a busy boundary control point. Besides, the capacity of most of the existing boundary control points are reaching or have already reached their current limits. The facilitation measures<sup>3</sup> for cross-boundary students cannot satisfy every child. Parents have to make transport arrangements on their own and ascertain the availability of such arrangements for their children to travel to and from schools before

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<sup>3</sup> The Government, on safety grounds for children of tender age to commute daily through the boundary control points, has, where possible, provided facilitation measures including granting special quotas to cross-boundary school coaches with designated parking spaces, Students e-Channel, Cross-Boundary Students Simplified Clearance Procedures, On-board Clearance Services, etc.

making any decision for their children to commute daily to schools in Hong Kong;

- (ii) All eligible applicant children (having met the requirements set out in paragraph 2), irrespective if they are residing in the Mainland or POA School Net, will be offered a public sector P1 place;
- (iii) The concerns of applicant children residing in the POA School Net should be addressed if their chances of being allocated a P1 place in the school net to which they belong are dampened due to the increase of applicant children residing in the Mainland; and
- (iv) Arrangements under the POA should be similar for all eligible applicant children unless with sound justifications. In other words, the residential status of parents of applicant children will not be taken into account in the allocation of school places.

In gist, the arrangements for applicant children residing in the POA School Net will remain unchanged. For applicant children residing in the Mainland, starting from POA 2014, while the arrangements for them to participate in the Discretionary Places Admission stage and Part A of the Central Allocation stage will remain unchanged, the arrangements for them to participate in Part B of the Central Allocation stage will be revised. Specific implementation details are set out in paragraphs 7 to 12.

### **Implementation Details**

7. As the applicant children are residing in the Mainland, they do not belong to any POA School Net. Their parents, starting from POA 2014, will not choose any school net as their applicant children's POA School Net for participation in Part B of the Central Allocation. The box "POA School Net No. of Home Address" at the top right hand corner of the application form for admission to P1 should be left blank.

8. Public sector primary schools, on receiving applications from applicant children residing in the Mainland at the Discretionary Places Admission stage, will no longer collect or verify documents for proof of the applicant children's residential address.

9. After the Discretionary Places Admission stage (i.e. in November each year), the EDB will estimate the provision of P1 places for the Central Allocation stage and the number of applicants having not been offered a discretionary place, and then compile a separate Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation for applicant children residing in the Mainland. The Choice of Schools List will provide applicant children residing in the Mainland with more school choices which will help them mix with students residing in the POA School Net and adapt to the local education system. Parents of applicant children residing in the Mainland will select primary schools from the Choice of Schools List in order of preference and fill in the Choice of Schools Form for participation in Part B of the Central Allocation.

10. The Choice of Schools List mentioned above will include the eight School Nets close to the boundary control points (i.e. Tuen Mun: 70 (Tuen Mun West), 71 (Tuen Mun East); Yuen Long: 72 (Tin Shui Wai), 74 (Yuen Long East); the North District: 80 (Sheung Shui), 81 (Fanling), 83 (Sha Tau Kok); Tai Po: 84) and other districts having cross-boundary students, especially those schools which are ready and willing to support cross-boundary students. The EDB will invite in writing, in early January each year, parents of applicant children residing in the Mainland to make school choices and provide them with the Choice of Schools List for the Central Allocation.

11. The number of school places provided by schools in the school nets / districts in the aforesaid Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation will vary subject to the respective demand and supply of individual school nets / districts. We will decide the number of school places of each school in the school nets / districts concerned for applicant children residing in the Mainland according to the following principles:

- (i) All schools in the eight School Nets mentioned in paragraph 10 will in principle set aside a minimum of two school places per provisional P1 class<sup>4</sup> for applicant children residing in the Mainland;
- (ii) Due consideration will be given to individual schools in the eight School Nets, specifically those which have been admitting relatively more cross-boundary students. We will consider allowing these schools on application to include more school places in the Choice of

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<sup>4</sup> The provisional number of P1 classes under the POA System for public sector primary schools may include the additional number of classes arising from the situation as mentioned in point (iv) below.

Schools List for Central Allocation for applicant children residing in the Mainland. The premise is that the demand for P1 places from applicant children residing in the school nets / districts concerned will be taken into account;

- (iii) Should the number of school places of a school net among the eight School Nets exceed the number of applicant children residing in the school net concerned, the number of school places per provisional P1 class to be provided by schools in the school net concerned will in principle be increased correspondingly. The premise is that the demand for P1 places from applicant children residing in the district(s) concerned will be taken into account. In practice, the number of places will be determined having regard to the total number of applicant children residing in the Mainland and the situation, if any, under point (ii) and / or point (iv) below;
- (iv) Anticipating that the supply of school places provided under points (i), (ii) and (iii) may not fully meet the demand from applicant children residing in the Mainland, we will require schools in the eight School Nets to provide more school places through measures such as making use of vacant classrooms, converting rooms for other purposes into additional classrooms, etc. for the Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation for applicant children residing in the Mainland. The premise is that the demand for P1 places from applicant children residing in the school nets / districts concerned (based on the projections as mentioned in paragraph 9) will be taken into account. If the number of school places provided by the schools in the school nets / districts concerned exceeds the estimated demand, the EDB will decide the number of school places to be provided by individual schools having due consideration to the situation of their respective school nets / districts;
- (v) In addition to the eight School Nets, we will, based on the results of the annual survey to schools on the number of cross-boundary students, invite schools in the school nets with cross-boundary students in kindergartens and / or primary schools, especially those ready and willing to support cross-boundary students, to provide some school places for the Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation for applicant children residing in the Mainland. The premise is that the demand for P1 places from applicant children residing in the school

nets concerned will be taken into account. The EDB will decide the number of school places to be provided by individual schools; and

- (vi) If the demand for P1 places from applicant children residing in the Mainland cannot be fully met after the steps afore-mentioned, we will require schools in school nets mentioned in (v) above (i.e. schools in school nets with cross-boundary students in kindergartens and / or primary schools) to provide school places for the Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation for applicant children residing in the Mainland. The premise is that the demand for P1 places from applicant children residing in the school nets concerned will be taken into account. We will adhere to the principles as set out in points (i) to (iv) above for provision of school places by the schools.

### **Computer Procedures in the Central Allocation**

12. All parents, when completing Part B Restricted School Choices of the Choice of Schools Form for Central Allocation, may select a maximum of 30 schools in order of preference in the Choice of Schools Form. Computer processing of school choices of an applicant child is based on his / her choices. In case of oversubscription to a school, the “Random Number” generated by the computer for each applicant child will decide the order of priority in allocating a school place to an applicant child. If an applicant child residing in the Mainland cannot be allocated a school place after computer processing of all his / her school choices, the computer will analyse the district(s) of the schools of his / her choice to allocate a P1 place from the remaining school places in the district(s) according to the order of preference in the Choice of Schools Form. In case there is no surplus school place in all districts of the applicant child’s school choices, the computer will allocate a P1 place from the remaining school places of the neighboring district(s) of the district(s) concerned in the Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation; a P1 place from the remaining school places in other districts in the Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation will be allocated to the applicant child should all places in the neighboring district(s) have been exhausted.

### **Enrolment Cap**

13. The basis for allocation of students under the POA for schools implementing small class teaching is 25 per P1 class and 30 students for other

schools. To address schools' concerns, the EDB has allowed schools to admit flexibly some students outside the POA System through an enrolment cap set at 27 for primary schools implementing small class teaching and 33 for other schools with 30 per class. The enrolment cap will in principle remain unchanged.

14. The supply and demand of school places in individual school nets under the POA System are subject to year-on-year changes due to various reasons. To ensure adequate provision of P1 places to meet the demand from all applicant children (including those residing in the POA School Net and in the Mainland), the EDB will continue with the established flexible arrangements to increase the supply of P1 places. The flexible arrangements include making use of vacant classrooms within the school net / district concerned, converting rooms for other purposes into additional classrooms, borrowing school places from adjacent school nets, etc. If necessary, the temporary measure of allocating more students to each P1 class in the school net / district concerned<sup>5</sup> will be put in place. The EDB will engage the schools concerned when working out the arrangement.

### **Briefing Sessions**

15. The EDB will hold briefing sessions for primary schools and kindergartens in end-August 2013 to elaborate on the details of the revised arrangements for the Central Allocation for applicant children residing in the Mainland as set out in this circular, in addition to the standing annual briefing sessions on the POA. For details, please refer to the Annex.

16. For enquiries, please contact the School Places Allocation Section of the EDB at 2832 7700 or 2832 7740.

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for Secretary for Education

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<sup>5</sup> Referring to POA 2013, when the number of school places provided by each P1 class in schools in the North District was increased to 30, schools implementing small class teaching would be provided with additional Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress posts for six years (i.e. from the 2013/14 to 2018/19 school years) on par with the provision for other schools with 30 students to support that cohort of students. The EDB Circular No. 19/2008 is relevant. When more than 30 school places per P1 class were required, schools would be provided an additional grant for six years, the calculation of which is based on the unit cost.



**Briefing Sessions on  
Revised Arrangements for Central Allocation Starting from POA 2014**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Target Participants</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>
<b>Kindergarten Heads / Teachers</b>			
27.8.2013 (Tuesday)	2:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Heads / teachers of kindergartens in <u>New Territories East &amp; New Territories West</u>	Please enrol online through the EDB Training Calendar (Course ECP020140009 [Event (ID): AA])
27.8.2013 (Tuesday)	4:00 - 5:30 p.m.	Heads / teachers of kindergartens in <u>Hong Kong &amp; Kowloon</u>	Please enrol online through the EDB Training Calendar (Course ECP020140009 [Event (ID): AB])
<b>Primary School Heads / Teachers</b>			
28.8.2013 (Wednesday)	9:00 - 10:30 a.m.	School Heads / teachers of primary schools in <u>Hong Kong &amp; Kowloon</u>	Please enrol online through the EDB Training Calendar (Course ECP020140010 [Event (ID): AA])
28.8.2013 (Wednesday)	11:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.	School Heads / teachers of primary schools in <u>New Territories East</u>	Please enrol online through the EDB Training Calendar (Course ECP020140010 [Event (ID): AB])
28.8.2013 (Wednesday)	2:00- 3:30 p.m.	School Heads / teachers of primary schools in <u>New Territories West</u>	Please enrol online through the EDB Training Calendar (Course ECP020140010 [Event (ID): AC])