

31 May 2018

Education Bureau Circular No. 6/2018

Enhancement of the Provision of School Nurse and Social Worker in Special Schools

[Note: This circular should be read by -

- (a) Supervisors and heads of aided special schools – for action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information.]

Summary

The Government will provide additional resources for special schools to enhance the provision of school nurse and social worker starting from the 2018/19 school year. This circular sets out the details and urges special schools, in accordance with the principle of Whole School Approach, to optimize the use of resources and manpower so as to provide students with appropriate education.

Background

2. To assist special schools to improve the quality of education in supporting students with more severe or multiple disabilities, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been providing resources and implementing relevant measures in special schools in accordance with the learning needs of students from the perspective of education profession. In general, these students require individualized learning support plans to foster their learning and to develop their potential. The EDB provides special schools with a better teacher-to-student ratio, a multi-disciplinary school-based support team¹ and various additional grants so as to enable special schools to systematically formulate and implement the individualized learning support plans to address the students' needs, and to timely review their progress under different learning areas with an aim to assisting students to achieve their targets in the support plans by phases.

¹ The EDB provides different types of special schools with related multi-disciplinary support team, includes teachers, school social workers, educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, etc.

3. Since the implementation of the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure in the 2009/10 school year, the Government has been continuously providing special schools with additional resources and manpower (please refer to Appendix). Special schools are urged to utilize and deploy the resources and manpower holistically and flexibly, and adopt the Whole School Approach to provide students with appropriate education and support. Special schools should record clearly the usage of various resources and the employment of staff. These school-based measures should also be included in the annual school plans and school reports to keep the stakeholders informed of the progress and effectiveness of these measures.

Details of the New Improvement Measures

4. With a view to assisting special schools to better cater for the needs of students, the Government announced in the 2018-19 Budget the improved provisions of school nurses and social workers in special schools starting from the 2018/19 school year.

Improving the Provision of School Nurse

5. In recent years, a certain number of students with delicate health conditions who require frequent and intensive nursing care have been enrolled in special schools. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the Government will provide an additional school nurse to schools for children with intellectual disability (ID), schools for children with physical disability (PD) and the school for children with visual impairment cum intellectual disability (VI cum ID). In addition, the school nurse provision will be expanded to cover the school for children with visual impairment (VI) and the school for children with hearing impairment (HI), so that these schools will each have a school nurse to strengthen their support for students with care needs.

6. Starting from the 2018/19 school year, the school nurse establishment in different types of special schools is as follows:

School Type	Number of Students	Number of School Nurses under the Enhancement Measure
School for Children with PD	(a) 40 – 129	(a) 2
School for Children with Severe ID (SID)	(b) 130 or more	(b) 3
School for Children with Mild ID (MiID)	40 or more	2
School for Children with Moderate ID (MoID)		
School for Children with MiID and MoID		
School for Children with VI cum ID		

School Type	Number of Students	Number of School Nurses under the Enhancement Measure
School for Children with VI	40 or more	1
School for Children with HI		

7. The EDB encourages special schools to employ school nurse as far as practicable. For special schools encountering recruitment difficulties of nurses, they may, if necessary, freeze some of the nurse vacancies in exchange for the “Cash Grant for Specialist Staff in Aided Special Schools” for recruiting temporary nurses or hire related services according to the existing arrangement. Please refer to the latest circular memorandum² for the use of the cash grant and its administrative arrangement.

Improving the Provision of School Social Worker and an Additional Consultation Service Grant

8. At present, special schools are provided with 0.5 school social worker for every 35 students. Where a school sponsoring body (SSB) operates 2 or more special schools, the EDB will combine the number of students of all the schools under the same SSB when calculating the staff provision of school social workers in accordance with the above-mentioned ratio, and discuss with the SSB the arrangements regarding the allocation of school social workers.

9. To enhance the provision of social work and guidance services in special schools, the Government will improve the provision of school social workers in special schools starting from the 2018/19 school year. Special schools with 60 or fewer approved capacity will be provided with 1 school social worker, and subsequently 0.5 school social worker for every 30 students. The calculation of staff provision of school social workers according to the combined number of students mentioned at paragraph 8 remains unchanged. The new measure ensures that every special school will be provided with at least one school social worker.

10. In addition, starting from the 2018/19 school year, special schools will be provided with a unit of Consultation Service Grant (CSG) per school social worker to purchase consultation, supervision or other support services to enhance the support and supervision for the school social workers. The CSG will be adjusted annually in accordance with the salary

² The prevailing one is EDB Circular Memorandum No. 13/2014 on Cash Grant for Specialist Staff in Aided Special Schools.

of the Social Work Officer³. For details of the CSG including the amount, uses, administration, payment and accounting arrangements of the grant etc., please refer to the latest relevant circular memorandum⁴.

11. The relevant sections in the Code of Aid for Special Schools and the Code of Aid for Aided Schools on the provision of the above additional resources will be revised accordingly.

Enquiries

12. For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officer.

Godwin LAI
for Permanent Secretary for Education

³ According to the salary level of 2017-18, the full year grant amount is \$118,629.

⁴ The prevailing one is EDB Circular Memorandum No. 36/2018 on the Policy of “One School One Social Worker for Each School” in Primary Schools.

Improvement measures in recent years	Relevant Circulars / Letters
2009/10 School Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation of the Senior Secondary Curriculum in aided special schools; 	<i>EDBC 3/2009</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the class size progressively to 15 students per class for schools for children with MiID; 	<i>EDBC 4/2009</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progressive implementation of the improvement measures on extension of years of study for students in aided special schools; 	<i>EDBC 3/2010</i>
2014/15 School Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the class size progressively to 12 students per class for schools for children with VI and schools for social development (SSD); 	<i>EDBC 11/2014</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing additional teacher assistants for schools for children with ID, schools for children with PD, and the school for children with VI cum ID as well as the psychiatric classes of the Hospital School; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the manning ratios of weekend and Sunday boarding service; re-grading the establishment of enrolled nurse to registered nurse in the boarding section of schools for children with VI, schools for children with HI and schools for children with MoID; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing an additional grant to enhance the support for boarders with medical complexity in special schools; 	<i>EDBC 13/2014</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools (including primary section of special schools) by phases in three years to attract more talents to join the teaching force of primary education so as to enhance the quality of teaching; 	<i>EDBC 5/2015</i>

2015/16 School Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on a par with aided secondary schools, allowing special schools to convert the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts; 	<i>EDBCM 36/2016</i>
2016/17 School Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing additional grant for schools for children with SID, schools for children with PD and the school for children with VI cum ID for employing additional nurses and related staff to strengthen the support for 24-hour ventilator-dependent students; 	<i>Circular letter to special schools concerned on 8 March 2017</i>
2017/18 School Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on a par with aided primary and secondary schools, increasing the teacher-to-class ratio for special schools by 0.1 across the board to provide additional teaching staff for schools to take forward various education initiatives and enhance the quality of education; 	<i>EDBC 10/2017</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing a recurrent cash grant to all public sector primary and secondary schools (including special schools) for strengthening the IT staffing support to practise e-learning and take forward various education initiatives which will harness IT; 	<i>EDBC 11/2017</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing an Assistant Primary School Master/Mistress (Curriculum Development) for special schools with less than six approved primary classes to replace the provision of the Curriculum Leadership Grant; 	<i>EDBC 12/2017</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing the schools for children with VI, schools for children with HI, schools for children with MiID and schools for children with MoID an occupational therapist and an occupational therapist assistant to enhance their support of students displaying weaknesses in their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination; 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing the school for children with VI and each SSD an speech therapist to enable them to develop and implement their own comprehensive and tailored support scheme in order to support the special educational needs of their students with speech and language impairment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extending the “Additional Support Grant for Enhancing the Support for Boarders with Medical Complexity in Aided Special Schools” to day students and day students cum boarders with medical complexity in special schools 	<i>EDBC 12/2017 and Circular letter to special schools concerned on 20 October 2017</i>