

31 October 2018

Education Bureau Circular No. 15/2018
Kindergarten Education Scheme
Strengthening School Governance and Transparency

[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 kindergartens, kindergartens-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes (hereafter collectively referred to as KGs) joining the kindergarten education scheme (hereafter referred to as Scheme) that they should establish a more participatory school governance framework to enhance transparency and accountability of school governance and effectiveness of school operation.

Background

2. According to the Education Ordinance, every school shall be managed by its management committee (Section 32). The management committee of a school shall be responsible for ensuring (a) that the school is managed satisfactorily; (b) that the education of the pupils is promoted in a proper manner; and (c) that the Education Ordinance is complied with (Section 33). In the actual operation, the school management committee (SMC) of a KG is responsible for managing the KG, including implementing the education policies of the Education Bureau (EDB) at school level, planning and managing financial and human resources, ensuring that the education of students is promoted in a proper manner, and devising self-improvement measures.

3. EDB has implemented the new KG education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year. The policy objectives are 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 new policy, the Government has substantially increased the recurrent expenditure on KG education and has made immense efforts to improve the quality of kindergarten education through various means. To strengthen accountability of public funding, KGs joining the Scheme (Scheme-KGs) should establish a more participatory school governance framework that facilitates participation of various stakeholders in the decision-making process, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability of school

governance as well as effectiveness of school operation.

Details

Composition and operation of SMCs

4. Since the operation of KGs is different from that of primary and secondary schools, the Incorporated Management Committees practised in aided primary and secondary schools are not applicable to the KG system. However, the SMC of each Scheme-KG should comprise different stakeholders as appropriate so as to strengthen school governance and enhance transparency. In this regard, KGs that apply to join the Scheme in the 2019/20 school year and/or thereafter shall undertake to review and/or refine the composition and operation of their SMCs, formulate and implement specific measures to comply with the following requirements:

- (a) There shall be no less than three school managers (including the school supervisor);
- (b) At least one school manager shall be nominated by the KG operator;
- (c) At least one school manager shall be a member of other stakeholders (parents of current pupils, serving teachers or alumni) of the KG, OR a community member who serves as an independent manager¹;
- (d) The principal shall attend SMC meetings (while whether the principal should serve as a school manager shall be decided by individual SMCs); and
- (e) An SMC constitution that stipulates the operating details should be formulated.

5. Taking into account the specific feature of diversity and flexible operation of the KG sector, and to provide more flexibility to the school sponsoring bodies (SSBs)/ operators operating a number of KGs, there shall be no restriction on the maximum number of school managers of a Scheme-KG. Besides, a school manager of a Scheme-KG is allowed to serve other schools and there shall be no restriction on the number of schools that a school manager could serve. The SMC should, with regard to the KG's school-based needs, formulate an SMC constitution that stipulates the operating details of the SMC, for example, the total number of SMC members and the number of SMC members under each category, the manner in which the representatives from each category of SMC members are selected (such as election, nomination, direct appointment, etc.) and their tenure of office, the mode of operation of the SMC (such as the number and arrangements of meetings, the procedures for handling matters, etc.).

¹ An independent manager shall not be a serving teacher, a serving staff member, a parent of a current pupil or an alumnus of the school. A person who is a member of the school's SMC/SSB/operator or of the governing body (if any, however described) shall not be nominated as an independent manager (but ex-members who have retired or left service from the SMC/SSB/operator/governing body concerned for three years or more shall not be subject to this limitation). The spouse, grand-parent, parent, brother, sister, child or grand-child of such a member, or an employee of the SMC/SSB/operator/governing body concerned shall not be nominated either.

Implementation strategies

6. In light of the diversified features and backgrounds of the KG sector, we appreciate that different KGs may progress in different pace for meeting the above requirements. Having regard to their own circumstances and needs, Scheme-KGs are therefore required to draw up specific plans and progressively take forward the relevant work to meet the above requirements in the 2022/23 school year or before. EDB will keep in view of KGs' progress and review the situation. EDB will provide relevant support, including more structured training programmes for school supervisors and managers which cover the following major areas: principles and the latest development of KG education; powers, functions and roles of SMCs, school supervisors and managers; major ordinances relating to the operation of KGs; school administration and management skills, etc.. We will announce the details and invite representatives of SSBs/operators, school supervisors and managers to attend in due course. In tandem, we will make relevant guidelines, tools and templates available for reference by SMCs of KGs. These materials will be uploaded to the EDB website in due course, and will be updated as necessary. EDB will keep close contact with SSBs/operators to better understand their concerns and offer support as appropriate.

Enquiries

7. For enquiries, please contact the Kindergarten Administration Section at 2186 8995 or 2180 7348.

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