

## **Education Bureau Circular No. 17/2019**

### **Student Activities Support Grant**

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (i) Supervisors and heads of all government schools, aided schools (including special schools), caput schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme – for action; and
- (ii) Heads of sections – for information.]

### **Summary**

The purpose of this circular is to set out the operation details about the Student Activities Support Grant (SAS Grant) and invite public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) to apply for the SAS Grant.

### **Background**

2. Life-wide learning extends learning beyond the classroom to other contexts, and attaches great importance to learning in authentic contexts as it enables students to achieve learning objectives which are difficult to achieve through classroom learning alone. The knowledge, skills, positive values and attitudes that students acquire in experiential learning is important in developing their lifelong learning capabilities and fostering their whole-person development.

3. To support students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised<sup>1</sup> by schools, the Education Bureau (EDB) set up in early 2019 the Student Activities Support Fund, the investment return of which will be used to provide the SAS Grant for application from public sector schools (including special schools) and DSS schools starting from the 2019/20 school year.

4. Alongside the SAS Grant, the EDB will also provide public sector schools and DSS schools with the Life-wide Learning Grant starting from the 2019/20 school year to support schools in taking forward, on the present foundation, life-wide learning with enhanced efforts. Schools may, in light of their school contexts, flexibly deploy the Life-wide Learning Grant to organise more out-of-classroom experiential learning activities in different Key Learning Areas

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<sup>1</sup> Life-wide learning activities recognised by schools refer to those organised by external organisations, and the schools have confidence in such organisations and acknowledge that the contents of the activities could help students achieve the objectives of life-wide learning (e.g. schools may nominate students to participate in programmes/activities/competitions organised by post-secondary institutions, sports associations and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department).

(KLAs) and curriculum areas. Details about the Life-wide Learning Grant are set out in EDB Circular No. 16/2019.

## **Details**

### **Calculation of the SAS Grant**

5. The SAS Grant is available for application starting from the 2019/20 school year to support students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised by schools. The amount of the SAS Grant to be disbursed to a school is calculated based on the number of students of the school in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or the full-grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (STAS full-grant) in that school year (based on the number in December of the school year). For calculation purposes, the rate for each primary school student is \$350 and that for each secondary school student is \$650. Please refer to paragraph 8 for details on the calculation and disbursement arrangements.

### **Beneficiaries and Ambit of the SAS Grant**

6. Beneficiaries of the SAS Grant are primary and secondary school students in receipt of either the CSSA or the STAS full-grant. In view that some families may lack the means to support their children to participate in life-wide learning activities but for various reasons are not in receipt of the CSSA or STAS full-grant, schools may formulate their own school-based criteria for identifying such students so that they could also benefit from the SAS Grant. However, the subsidy for supporting such students should be capped at 25% of the total provision of the SAS Grant<sup>2</sup> for the school year.

7. In supporting students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities, schools should, taking into account the learning needs of their students, formulate school-based criteria to ensure that the SAS Grant is deployed in a fair and impartial manner. Schools should make appropriate allocation of resources and avoid confining the use of the SAS Grant to a single item / area or a minority of students. Schools may deploy the SAS Grant to subsidise students with financial needs to:

- participate in life-wide learning activities covering different KLAs and curriculum areas;
- participate in diversified learning activities with a view to enriching the five essential learning experiences (including intellectual development, moral and civic education, community service, physical and aesthetic development, and career-related experiences) for students; and

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<sup>2</sup> If there is a genuine need to allocate provision exceeding the capped amount for students meeting the school-based criteria as being financially needy, schools may approach the respective Senior School Development Officers. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.

- purchase basic and essential learning materials and equipment for participating in life-wide learning activities.

### **Disbursement Arrangements**

8. Schools may apply for the SAS Grant every year. The SAS Grant will be disbursed to schools in two instalments in September and March of each school year. Each instalment will amount to 50% of the SAS Grant in that school year. The EDB will inform each school of the amount to be disbursed to the school in a timely manner. Taking the 2019/20 school year as an example, the EDB will calculate the provisional amount of the SAS Grant for a school based on the number of students of the school in receipt of either the CSSA or the STAS full-grant in April 2019, and disburse 50% of this provisional amount in September 2019 as the first instalment. Based on the number of students of the school in receipt of either the CSSA or the STAS full-grant in December 2019, the actual amount of the SAS Grant will be worked out and the second instalment of the SAS Grant, i.e. the difference between the amount disbursed in the first instalment and the actual amount of the SAS Grant, will be disbursed to the school in March 2020.

### **Evaluation and Accountability**

9. Schools are required to observe relevant EDB guidelines when using the SAS Grant and are accountable for its proper use. School-based criteria should be formulated to ensure the appropriate allocation of the funds. In line with the principle of school-based management, schools should regularly monitor the use of the SAS Grant, and include the report on the use of the SAS Grant in the School Report of the school year concerned for submission to their School Management Committees (SMCs) / Incorporated Management Committees (IMCs) for endorsement, and uploading such reports onto the school website. The Guidelines on the Use of the SAS Grant and the template for the Report on the Use of the SAS Grant are at **Annexes 1 and 2** respectively.

### **Accounting and Financial Arrangement**

10. Aided schools, caput schools and DSS schools are required to keep a separate ledger account to record all incomes and expenditures chargeable to the SAS Grant and submit the annual audited accounts to the EDB in accordance with the existing requirements. Schools should exercise prudence in deploying the SAS Grant, and any deficit incurred should be met by the schools' own funds. For government schools, all relevant expenditures should be charged to the user code / deposit account assigned under the prevailing financial guidelines and the spending in a school year should not exceed the allocated amount of the SAS Grant. Schools should keep all income and expenditure records and related receipts / invoices which shall be made available to the EDB for inspection when necessary.

## **Clawback Arrangements**

11. Schools are encouraged to fully utilise the SAS Grant provided every school year to benefit students with financial needs within the same school year. For aided schools, caput schools and DSS schools, any unspent balance of the SAS Grant should be returned to the EDB / Student Activities Support Fund according to the annual audited accounts for that school year (i.e. from 1 September to 31 August). For government schools, any unspent balance of the SAS Grant for a school year should be returned to the EDB / Student Activities Support Fund according to the records of the assigned user code / deposit account. Schools are not allowed to transfer any funds / unspent balance out of the SAS Grant.

## **Application Procedures**

12. To apply for the SAS Grant, schools should download the application form from the webpage of the Life-wide Learning Section of the EDB (Home > Curriculum Development > Curriculum Emphasis > Life-wide Learning), and return the duly completed form to the Curriculum Development Institute of the EDB by the deadline (deadline for the 2019/20 school year will be 15 July 2019).

## **Enquiry**

13. For the latest information and Frequently Asked Questions about the SAS Grant, please refer to the webpage of the Life-wide Learning Section of the EDB (Home > Curriculum Development > Curriculum Emphasis > Life-wide Learning). For enquiries, please contact the Life-wide Learning Section of the Curriculum Development Institute on 3540 6905 or 3540 7436.

Sheridan LEE  
for Permanent Secretary for Education

## **Guidelines on the Use of Student Activities Support Grant**

### **Principles on the use of the Student Activities Support Grant (the Grant)**

1. Schools should properly use the Grant in conjunction with other suitable resources, such as the Life-wide Learning Grant and education funding schemes run by the Government or community organisations, to support students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities for whole-person development.
2. Schools should strictly observe relevant circulars and guidelines on the use of public funds issued by the EDB, formulate school-based criteria in light of students' learning needs to ensure fair and impartial use of the Grant, and regularly examine and evaluate whether the resources are effectively utilised.
3. Adhering to the principles of fiscal prudence and avoiding extravagance, schools should ensure that all expenditures are incurred to serve the purposes specified for the Grant and should keep in view the cost-effectiveness.
4. Transparency should be enhanced for stakeholders, and the principles on the use of the Grant should be made known to them.
5. While the Grant disbursed to schools is based on the number of students in receipt of CSSA or STAS full-grant for the school year, the entitlement for such students in calculating the provision for schools should not be regarded as a set rate for each student beneficiary. Schools should holistically consider the school contexts and learning needs of students to effectively utilise the Grant to support students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities.
6. Schools should not confine the use of the Grant to a single item / area or a minority of students. Under exceptional circumstances, if a school, upon careful consideration, considers it necessary to deploy the Grant to subsidise needy students to participate in activities / programmes that incur higher costs, it must obtain the prior approval from its SMC / IMC.
7. The Grant should be used for supporting students in receipt of CSSA or STAS full-grant in the school to participate in life-wide learning activities. Given that some families may lack means to support their children in joining life-wide learning activities but for various reasons do not receive CSSA or STAS full-grant, schools are allowed to formulate school-based criteria for identifying students with financial needs who are not CSSA or STAS full-grant recipients. However, the subsidy for supporting students who meet the school-

based criteria should be capped at 25% of the total provision of the Grant for the school year. If there is a genuine need to allocate provision exceeding the capped amount, schools may approach the respective Senior School Development Officers by January of the respective school year. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.

## **Ambit**

8. Schools may deploy the Grant to subsidise students with financial needs to:

- participate in life-wide learning activities covering different KLAs and curriculum areas;
- participate in diversified learning activities with a view to enriching the five essential learning experiences (including intellectual development, moral and civic education, community service, physical and aesthetic development, and career-related experiences) for students; and
- purchase basic and essential learning materials and equipment for participating in life-wide learning activities.

9. Examples on the use of the Grant that are in line with the principles:

- Subsidising students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised<sup>3</sup> by schools, including school-based learning activities, extra-curricular activities and after-school activities with clear learning objectives
- Enriching financially needy students' learning experiences by defraying the activity and travelling<sup>4</sup> expenses incurred:
  - Intellectual development (closely linked with curriculum): e.g. visits to exhibitions and field trips
  - Moral and civic education: e.g. leadership training, experimental learning camps and military camps
  - Community service: e.g. service learning and uniformed groups
  - Physical and aesthetic development: e.g. sports competitions and drama performances
  - Career-related experiences: e.g. work experience programmes and visits to enterprises

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<sup>3</sup> Life-wide learning activities recognised by schools refer to those organised by external organisations, and the schools have confidence in such organisations and acknowledge that the contents of the activities could help students achieve the objectives of life-wide learning (e.g. schools may nominate students to participate in programmes/activities/competitions organised by post-secondary institutions, sports associations and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department).

<sup>4</sup> Schools should select the most suitable and economical mode of transportation according to needs.

- Subsidising students with financial needs to participate in local or non-local competitions by covering the expenses incurred for registration, transportation, accommodation, and procuring materials / apparel for the competitions
- Subsidising<sup>5</sup> students with financial needs to participate in exchange activities outside Hong Kong<sup>6</sup>
- Subsidising students with financial needs to participate in fee-charging activities or training programmes (e.g. educational camps, scientific exploration activities and sports training) that are related to different KLAs / subjects and cross-curricular learning and organised by local post-secondary institutions, non-profit-making organisations, academic associations and professional bodies
- Subsidising students with financial needs to purchase learning materials or equipment (e.g. musical instruments and sports equipment) for participating in life-wide learning activities.

10. Examples of the use of Grant that are not in line with the principles:

- Employing teaching or non-teaching staff
- Subsidising students' participation in activities that are unrelated to different KLAs / subjects and life-wide learning
- Subsidising students' participation in activities that are primarily focused on academic performance, e.g. tutorial groups
- Subsidising students' participation in any form of assessment, or procuring services or materials to drill students for assessment
- Meeting the expenses on promotional and publicity activities, social events or celebrations (e.g. graduation dinners and parties)
- Meeting banquet- or courtesy-related expenses
- Meeting the expenses for food and beverages (however, meal expenses included in the expenditures on educational camps, training camps and non-local exchange

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<sup>5</sup> The Grant should not cover personal items, consumer articles / items, or personal comprehensive travel insurance.

<sup>6</sup> Schools may organise more expeditions and exchange activities to the Mainland or countries/regions along the Belt and Road for students to know more about the development of our country. Provided that the principles on the use of relevant funds are observed, schools may use the Grant in conjunction with the EDB's funding for the Mainland Exchange Programmes for students (including the subvention schemes) or the Sister School Scheme to make up for the subsidies as necessary when organising the related activities. Besides, it is recommended that priority should be given to students who have never participated in exchange activities outside Hong Kong.

activities can be covered)

- Purchasing gifts or prizes for competitions or other activities.
  - Subsidising teachers or parent volunteers for leading student activities.
11. The above examples are by no means exhaustive. SMCs / IMCs should prudently deploy the Grant and properly allocate the resources, and should not confine the use of the Grant to a single item / area or a minority of students. SMCs / IMCs should also ensure that the resources are utilised in a cost-effective manner and that each item of expenditure incurred is in line with the principles and ambit of the Grant.

### **Points to note in conducting life-wide learning activities**

12. Regarding students' safety when participating in extra-curricular activities, schools should observe relevant guidelines provided by the EDB, such as "Guidelines on Outdoor Activities", "Guidelines on Extra-curricular Activities in Schools" and "Guidelines on Study Tours Outside Hong Kong". When planning and organising activities (including those co-organised with other parties), schools should ensure that the activities are free from danger to safeguard students, and that the expected learning objectives could be achieved.
13. With the implementation of the Sexual Conviction Record Check Scheme by the Hong Kong Police Force, schools should adopt the Scheme to further safeguard the well-being of students when appointing instructors or other persons to provide educational and related services for students. Details are set out in EDB Circular Memorandum No. 179/2011.



(Template)  
**Report on the Use of the Student Activities Support Grant**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **School Year**

**I. Financial Overview**

A	Allocation in the Current School Year:	\$
B	Expenditure in the Current School Year:	\$
C	Unspent Amount to be Returned to the EDB (A – B):	\$

**II. Number of Student Beneficiaries and Subsidised Amount**

Category	Number of Student Beneficiaries	Subsidised Amount
Comprehensive Social Security Assistance		\$
Full-grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme		\$
Meeting the school-based financially needy criteria (capped at 25% of the total allocation for the school year)		\$
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$  (Remark: This item should be equal to the “Expenditure in the Current School Year” in Part I B)

### III. Details of Expenses

Domain	Brief Description of the Activity	Expenses (\$)	Person Times of Student Beneficiaries <sup>7</sup>	Essential Learning Experiences (Please put a ✓ in the appropriate box(es); more than one option can be selected)					
				I	M	P	S	C	
				I: Intellectual Development (closely linked with curriculum) M: Moral and Civic Education P: Physical and Aesthetic Development S: Community Service C: Career-related Experiences					
<b>1.1</b>	<b>To subsidise students with financial needs to participate in life-wide learning activities covering different KLAs / cross-KLA / curriculum areas to enhance learning effectiveness (e.g. field trips, arts appreciation, visits to enterprises)</b>								
Language									
Geography									
Chinese History									
...									
Cross-KLA (e.g. STEM)									
<b>1.2</b>	<b>To subsidise students with financial needs to participate in diversified life-wide learning activities with a view to enriching the five essential learning experiences for them (e.g. activities on multiple intelligences; physical, aesthetic and cultural activities; leadership training; service learning; clubs and societies; school team training; uniformed groups; military camps)</b>								
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<b>1.3</b>	<b>To subsidise students with financial needs to participate in non-local exchange activities or competitions</b>								
<b>1.4</b>	<b>To subsidise students with financial needs to purchase basic and essential learning materials and equipment for participating in life-wide learning activities</b>								
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Others</b>								
<b>Total</b>									

<sup>7</sup> Person times of student beneficiaries in this column refers to the sum of student beneficiaries participating in each activity, i.e. a student beneficiary participating in more than one activity can be counted more than once.