

28 March 2025

## **Education Bureau Circular No. 3/2025**

### **Enhancement Measures for Boarding Sections of Aided Special Schools - Personal Care Enhancement Grant for Boarders**

[Note: This circular should be read by –

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of aided special schools with a boarding section – for action; and
- (b) Supervisors and Heads of other aided special schools and Heads of sections – for information.]

#### **Summary**

This circular sets out the enhancement measures for the boarding sections of aided special schools (hereafter referred to as “special schools”) and provides details about the Personal Care Enhancement Grant for Boarders (Enhancement Grant). The Education Bureau (EDB) Circular No. 4/2020 dated 25 May 2020 is hereby superseded.

#### **Background**

2. The provision of boarding service<sup>1</sup> in special schools aims to cater for the long-term residential needs of students with more severe or multiple disabilities and hence facilitate their schooling during school days. Currently, some special schools offer 5-day and/or 7-day boarding services based on the needs of students, complemented by personal care services during non-school sessions. To assist special schools in enhancing the quality of their boarding service to ensure timely support for boarders, EDB has introduced various enhanced measures since the 2020/21 school year, as outlined in the Chief Executive’s 2019 Policy Address. These measures, which aim to improve the manpower and resources of special schools and their boarding sections, include upgrading the rank of wardens, increasing the establishment of assistant wardens and houseparents-in-charge, increasing the manning ratios in boarding sections on Saturdays and Sundays, and providing the Personal Care Worker Grant (PCWG).

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<sup>1</sup> Residential home placement in schools for social development is subvented by the Social Welfare Department.

## Details

3. The aforementioned measures to upgrade the rank of wardens, increase the establishment of assistant wardens and houseparents-in-charge, and improve the manning ratios in boarding sections on Saturdays and Sundays will remain in place, as detailed in the Annex.

4. Regarding the PCWG for boarding sections, it will be replaced by the Enhancement Grant starting from the 2025/26 school year, as announced by the Chief Executive in the 2024 Policy Address, with a view to enhancing the personal care services provided for boarders of relevant special schools. Each school for children with physical disability (PD), moderate intellectual disability (MoID), severe ID (SID), and visual impairment (VI) cum ID that has a boarding section (hereafter collectively referred to as “eligible special schools”) will receive the Enhancement Grant, which enables them to employ auxiliary staff as needed, thereby enhancing the personal care services for boarders with more severe or multiple disabilities.

## The Enhancement Grant

### *Calculations*

5. Each eligible special school will receive the Enhancement Grant every school year. The grant rates, as calculated based on the mode of boarding services and boarders’ circumstances, are detailed as follows:

- (i) all eligible special schools will receive at least one unit of the Enhancement Grant;
- (ii) eligible special schools offering both 5-day and 7-day boarding services concurrently in the school year will receive one additional unit of the Enhancement Grant; and
- (iii) each eligible special school offering both 5-day and 7-day boarding services concurrently are required to take care of boarders with PD, SID, or VI cum ID who require relatively more intensive care will receive additional units of Enhancement Grant based on the approved boarding capacity for the school year, as tabulated below:

Approved boarding capacity for boarders with <i>PD, SID</i> or <i>VI cum ID</i>	Additional unit of Enhancement Grant
40 to 59 places	0.5 unit
60 to 79 places	1 unit
80 to 99 places	1.5 units
100 to 119 places	2 units

The amount of each unit of the Enhancement Grant is equivalent to the annual salary of a health worker (calculated based on the mid-point salary of a health

worker as prescribed in the Salary Scale of Common Posts in the Non-governmental Organisations released by the Social Welfare Department), plus the employer's mandatory contributions made to a Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) scheme, subject to adjustment on a school year basis<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Use of the Grant*

6. Eligible special schools should, in light of their own needs, deploy the Enhancement Grant in conjunction with the existing manpower and resources, including the Additional Support Grant for Enhancing the Support for Boarders with Medical Complexity in Aided Special Schools, Additional Grant for 24-hour Ventilator-Assisted Students, etc., to meet the actual needs of their boarders. Schools may use the grant to employ additional staff with relevant healthcare knowledge and skills, such as health workers or personal care workers. Schools may also, depending on their own circumstances and boarders' needs, use the grant to employ additional auxiliary staff (such as janitor staff) or hire services to provide personal care for boarders.

7. If eligible special schools use the Enhancement Grant to employ additional staff, all expenditure incurred (including but not limited to salaries, leave entitlements, and statutory benefits such as MPF, long service payment, severance payment, and payment in lieu of notice) should also be covered by the grant.

8. For matters related to appointment and hiring of services, please refer to the School Administration Guide and relevant EDB circulars and guidelines.

#### *Disbursement Arrangement*

9. The above measure will only be implemented subject to the Legislative Council's passage of the Appropriation Bill 2025.

10. The Enhancement Grant will be disbursed to eligible special schools in two instalments, with seven-twelfths and five-twelfths of its annual amount disbursed in September and April of each school year respectively.

#### *Financial and Accounting Arrangements*

11. Eligible special schools are required to keep a separate ledger account to properly record all relevant income and expenditure items of the Enhancement Grant. All books of accounts, receipts, invoices, financial records and related documents must be handled in accordance with the accounting procedures and filed properly for inspection as necessary. Schools should comply with EDB's requirements on the submission of annual audited accounts as set out in the

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<sup>2</sup> The amount of each unit of the Enhancement Grant in each school year is determined based on the mid-point salary of a health worker in September of the respective school year. For example, in accordance with 2024-25 Civil Service Master Pay Scale Point 11, the amount of each unit is \$355,635 (which includes employer's mandatory contributions made to an MPF scheme).

relevant circular memoranda and their appendices when preparing ledger accounts and annual accounts. Schools failing to provide relevant documents (including annual audited accounts) for inspection as scheduled or found not using the Enhancement Grant according to the ambit stated in this circular will be required to return the disbursed grant to EDB.

12. Eligible special schools should, in principle, fully utilise the Enhancement Grant each school year. However, in view of the operational needs of their boarding sections, schools are allowed to retain a surplus up to 12 months' provision of the grant. Based on the annual audited accounts, special schools should return any surplus in excess of the capped amount to EDB. Transfer of the Enhancement Grant/its unspent balance to any other accounts is not permitted.

13. Special schools should note that the Enhancement Grant is outside the scope of the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant (EOEBG). In the case of a deficit, it may be borne by the surplus of the EOEBG as appropriate. Any remaining shortfall shall be covered by the school's own funds.

#### *Evaluation and Accountability*

14. Under the enhanced School Development and Accountability framework, schools should adopt self-evaluation for continuous development through the "Planning-Implementation-Evaluation" cycle and enhance transparency and accountability in the spirit of school-based management. In this connection, special schools are required to include the annual report on the usage of resources (including the Enhancement Grant stated in this circular) in supporting students (including boarders) in their School Report of the respective school year. The School Reports, endorsed by the Incorporated Management Committee, should be uploaded onto the school website for the information of the public.

#### **Enquiries**

15. For enquiries about the above enhancement measures, please contact the Senior Inspector of the Special Education Support 1 Section on 3698 4271. As for enquiries about staff appointment, procurement and administrative matters, etc., please contact the Senior School Development Officer of the respective district.

Mrs Gloria LI  
for Permanent Secretary for Education

**Enhancement of Staff Establishment of  
Aided Special Schools and their Boarding Sections**

With effect from the 2020/21 school year, the staff establishment of special schools and their boarding sections has been enhanced as follows:

1. Rank of Wardens and Establishment of Assistant Wardens and Houseparents-in-charge

With effect from the 2020/21 school year, the rank of wardens on the establishment of boarding sections with a capacity of 40 or above has been upgraded to Social Work Officer, while that on the establishment of boarding sections with a capacity below 40 has remained as Assistant Social Work Officer.

In addition, the rank of assistant wardens on the establishment of boarding sections with a capacity of 40 or above has been upgraded correspondingly to Assistant Social Work Officer, and the number of posts has been increased to 2. Schools may follow the existing arrangement to appoint 2 members of staff among houseparents and programme workers on the approved establishment as assistant wardens. In tandem, 1 houseparent-in-charge may be appointed among every 4 houseparents in these boarding sections.

2. Manning Ratios in Boarding Sections on Saturdays and Sundays

The manning ratio for houseparents, programme workers, nurses, cooks and janitor staff in the boarding sections of special schools offering 5-day and 7-day boarding services has been increased to 1:2 with effect from the 2020/21 school year. Besides, the number of watchmen in boarding sections offering 7-day boarding service has been increased across-the-board to 4.

For further details, please refer to the relevant sections of the Code of Aid for Special Schools, Code of Aid for Aided Schools and Compendium to Code of Aid for Aided Schools.