

15 July 2025

Education Bureau Circular No. 16/2025

**Entry of Non-local Children and
Children Holding a Form of Recognizance
to Schools in Hong Kong**

[Note: This circular should be read by -

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of all schools - for necessary action; and*
- (b) Heads of Sections - for information or necessary action]*

Summary

This circular updates and reminds schools of the criteria and procedures for admission of –

- (a) non-local children; and
- (b) children holding a Form of Recognizance

to schools in Hong Kong.

Details

(A) Non-local Children

2. Permission for non-locals to enter or reside in Hong Kong for any purpose is at the discretion of the Director of Immigration. Thus, non-local children may enter or reside in Hong Kong for the purpose of education only with the approval of the Director of Immigration.

3. In general, and subject to the Director of Immigration's decision in individual cases, there is no objection to the entry and residence of a non-local child for the purpose of attending a school registered under the Education Ordinance. However, non-local children are not to be regarded as having a right of access to places in public sector schools, i.e. government, aided and Caput schools. Although English Schools Foundation schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools can admit non-local children, these children are not eligible for government subsidy. Only persons holding one of the documents stipulated in paragraph 4 of this Circular will be eligible for government subsidy.

Admission to public sector schools

4. School places in public sector schools are for Hong Kong children and children residing in Hong Kong with their families as Hong Kong resident. This applies to primary schools, secondary schools and special schools. Admission to public sector schools is restricted to persons holding one of the following documents:

(a) Hong Kong Birth Certificate

- (i) For birth registration effected on or after 1 July 1987, column 12 or 11 of their birth certificates must indicate their Hong Kong permanent resident status as “*Established*”;
- (ii) Persons whose Hong Kong permanent resident status is shown as “*Not established*” in the birth certificate should have a Permit to Remain in Hong Kong - ID 235B^{Note} or valid travel documents, with one of the endorsements or landing slips if applicable, listed in (c) below.

Note – Under the new non-stamping arrangement, a label bearing the imposed condition of stay in respect of the child will be printed and affixed onto the ID235B in lieu of stamping with effect from 6 January 2017.

(b) Hong Kong Identity Card

A Hong Kong Identity Card issued on or after 26 November 2018^{Note} which does not bear the symbol “C” (for conditional stay) at the line below the date of birth of the holder. If the symbol “C” is shown, the holder must have a valid travel document with one of the endorsements or landing slips if applicable, listed in (c) below.

Note – All old form of smart identity cards with date of issue between 23 June 2003 and 25 November 2018 (old ID cards) become invalid in two phases in 2025 in accordance with the Registration of Persons (Invalidation of Identity Cards) Order 2024. Phase I of the invalidation exercise covers holders of old ID cards born in 1970 or after, whose old cards have become invalid on 12 May 2025. Phase II of the invalidation exercise covers holders of old ID cards born in 1969 or before, whose old cards will become invalid on 12 October 2025.

(c) Travel Document

A valid travel document with any of the following endorsements, or landing slips if applicable:

- (i) *“Holder's eligibility for Hong Kong permanent identity card verified.”;*
- (ii) *“The holder of this travel document has the right to land in Hong Kong. (Section 2AAA, Immigration Ordinance, Cap. 115, Laws of Hong Kong.)”;*
- (iii) *“Previous conditions of stay are hereby cancelled”;*
- (iv) *“Permitted to stay unconditionally;”*
- (v) *“Permitted to remain until (date*)”;*
- (vi) *“Permitted to remain until (date*) Employment is not permitted”;*
- (vii) *“Permitted to remain until (date*) or two months after termination of the employment contract of holder's sponsor, whichever is earlier.”;*
- (viii) *“Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (ix) *“Permission to remain extended until (date*) Employment is not permitted”;*
- (x) *“General Employment Policy (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*

- (xi) *“Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xii) *“Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xiii) *“Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xiv) *“Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xv) *“Technology Talent Admission Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xvi) *“Top Talent Pass Scheme (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xvii) *“Previous conditions of stay are hereby varied - Permission to remain extended until (date*)”;*
- (xviii) *“Technology Talent Admission Scheme (for Companies Subsidised under the New Industrialisation Acceleration Scheme) (Dependant) - Permission to remain extended until (date*) or two months after termination of the employment contract of the holder’s sponsor, whichever is earlier;*
- (xix) *“Dependant of Person Admitted to Hong Kong for Study – Permission to remain extended until (date*) Employment is not permitted”; or*
- (xx) *“Dependant of Person Admitted to Hong Kong for Training – Permission to remain extended until (date*)”.*

Remarks*: the date showing the limit of stay in Hong Kong is still valid at the time of admission to school.

Note -With effect from 28 December 2021, the Immigration Department has implemented the "e-Visa" arrangement. With the implementation of the "e-Visa" arrangement, the Immigration Department has ceased issuing sticker-type physical labels for entry visa/permit and extension of stay, etc.

Admission to non-public sector schools

5. Persons whose travel documents bear any of the following endorsements, or landing slips if applicable, can reside in Hong Kong for the purpose of education in non-public sector schools (including private schools, Private Independent Schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme schools, English Schools Foundation schools or international schools) only. They cannot be admitted to public sector schools:

- (a) “*STUDENT - Permitted to remain until (date[^])*”; and
- (b) “*STUDENT - Permission to remain extended until (date[^])*”.

Remarks[^]: the date showing the limit of stay in Hong Kong is still valid at the time of admission to school.

Procedure for admission of non-local children

6. Unless clearance is obtained from the Director of Immigration, no child whose travel document/passport bears the endorsement “**Visitor**” over the immigration stamp or issued with a landing slip imposed with condition of stay “**Visitor**” upon arrival should be admitted to any school in Hong Kong.

7. In the event of your receiving an application on behalf of a child whom you may have reason to believe to be a non-local, **you should advise the person making the application to make enquiry to the Immigration Department as soon as possible regarding application for a visa/entry permit to enter the HKSAR for study or for residence.** If the applicant for a place does not hold any document as indicated in paragraphs 4(c) or 5 above and you are in any doubt as to the immigration status of the applicant for a place, you may contact Extension Section of the Immigration Department at 3861 7432 for advice (other than applicants holding a Form of Recognizance). A sample letter to the Director of Immigration and an authorization form to be completed by the applicant’s parent/guardian are attached (Appendices I and II) for your reference.

8. You must not offer a school place to a child who is not a resident of Hong Kong, unless it is confirmed that the child is permitted by the Director of Immigration to reside in Hong Kong as indicated in paragraphs 4(c) or 5 above. In the case of public sector schools, admission of non-locals is restricted to those detailed in paragraph 4(c) above. In case of doubt, schools may consider issuing a conditional acceptance letter. Such a letter must make it clear that the offer of a school place is temporary and subject to the Director of Immigration's approval.

(B) Children Holding a Form of Recognizance

9. Children who have no legal right to remain in Hong Kong will not be allowed to attend schools in Hong Kong and will be repatriated. For those who claim to have the right to remain in Hong Kong or refugees, and non-refoulement claimants liable to removal and have entered into recognizance in the prescribed form by the Director of Immigration, consideration may be given on a case by case basis to allow them to receive education **temporarily**.

10. On receipt of applications from parents of these children, schools should refer the applications to their respective Senior School Development Officers. When approached by schools or parents of these children, the Senior School Development Officers concerned will seek the comments of the Director of Immigration. Upon confirmation from the Director of Immigration that he has no comments on allowing these children to attend schools in Hong Kong during the time that their cases are still under examination, the Senior School Development Officers will inform schools to admit these children or arrange school places for them.

11. In any case, schools must **NOT** offer these children a school place until confirmation has been received from their Senior School Development Officers that the children may be admitted.

12. The above arrangements for children holding a form of recognizance are applicable to all schools including public sector and non-public sector schools. Please note that the children's admission will in no way affect the outcome of the assessment of their claims/cases and should not be construed as having been given permission by the Director of Immigration to remain in Hong Kong. The admission of a child to a school does not give rise to an undertaking by the Director of Immigration that removal proceedings would not be instituted or continued.

13. This circular replaces EDB Circular No. 18/2024 of 9 July 2024.

Enquiry

14. Should you have any enquiries, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officer.

Miss Katharine CHOI
for Secretary for Education

Appendix I

Director of Immigration

(Attn.: Extension Section)

Address: 5th Floor, Administration Tower

Immigration Headquarters, 61 Po Yap Road

Tseung Kwan O, New Territories

Fax No.: 2586 1431

(Address of School)

(Contact no. of School)

(Date)

Dear Sir/Madam

(Name of Applicant)

D.O.B. M/F*

The captioned child applies for admission to _____(Name of School), a government/aided/ Caput/non-public sector * school in Hong Kong. From the identity papers attached, it is noted that the applicant does not hold any document as stipulated at Para. 4/5* of EDB Circular No. _____ on Entry of Non-local Children and Children Holding a Form of Recognizance to Schools in Hong Kong issued on _____.

2. For the purpose of considering his/her application, I should therefore be grateful if you would advise me, within one month from the date of this letter, whether the child belongs to one of the categories of status mentioned at Para. 4/5* of the said circular for admission to my school. Please forward your reply to the above school address or by fax at* _____.

Yours faithfully

(_____)
Principal/Supervisor*
(School Name)

* Delete whichever is inapplicable

AUTHORISATION

I hereby authorise the Director of Immigration, or his representative, to release all information related to the identity of my child_____ (Name of Applicant) to _____ (Name of School) and the Education Bureau for their handling of his/her application for admission to school.

Parent/Guardian's signature: _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

HKID Card No.: _____

Date: _____