

Education Bureau
Circular Memorandum No. 36/2022

From : Secretary for Education
Ref. : EDB(EPS/NTW)/1-50/5(1)
Date: 28 February 2022

To : Supervisors / Heads of all
government, aided (excluding special
schools), caput and schools under the
Direct Subsidy Scheme

Application for joining the Project on
‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder’
2022/23 school year

Summary

Schools in general find teaching students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) very challenging. In the light of this, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been vigorously implementing a multi-disciplinary and an evidence-based Project on ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder’ (hereinafter referred to as the Tiered ASD Project) since the 2020/21 school year, assisting schools in optimising their support systems and implementing related measures to support students with ASD. This circular memorandum serves to invite ordinary primary and secondary schools to apply for the Tiered ASD Project in the 2022/23 school year to enhance the support for students with ASD.

Details

2. The Tiered ASD Project comprises two parts: (1) ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’; and (2) ‘Non-Governmental Organisation and School Collaboration’.

Part 1: ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’

3. Schools joining the ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ will normally receive a 2-year support service. A team of multi-disciplinary professionals led by the educational psychologists of the EDB (hereinafter referred to as the team of multi-disciplinary professionals) will provide six to eight days per school year of on-site support through practice-based coaching for the participating schools to conduct situated learning for teachers. Through the provision of consultation, case discussion, lesson observation and feedback, workshops and inter-school network sharing, the school personnel would be equipped to

effectively deploy the Tiered ASD Model and related strategies to cater for the needs of three to four target students¹ with ASD and significant difficulties.

4. During the period of receiving the support, the team of multi-disciplinary professionals will assist schools by providing consultation on the design of Individual Educational Plan with three tiers, participating in the IEP conferences, where appropriate, to offer professional advice, helping the school personnel to plan the contents of the training sessions at Tier-2 and Tier-3 and giving them suggestions on the selection and deployment of effective intervention strategies, facilitating the development of the related training resources, and even demonstrating the skills and strategies for teachers as appropriate. The school personnel are required to try employing different evidence-based intervention strategies for ASD, and promote the use of them to the whole school such that more quality and appropriate support could be provided to other students with ASD. Schools are also expected to develop sustainable multifaceted measures to cater for students with ASD, enabling all teaching staff to deploy related intervention strategies with a view to moving towards a Whole School Approach to supporting students with ASD.

Part 2: ‘Non-Governmental Organisation and School Collaboration’

5. This part will use the service model adopted in the ‘JC A-Connect: Autism Support Network Project’ (2015/16 to 2020/21 school years) whereby the ‘Non-Governmental Organisation and School Collaboration’ (hereinafter referred to as the NGO-School Collaboration) has been proven to be effective. The expertise of the NGOs (hereinafter referred to as the Service Providers) in supporting students with ASD will be tapped to help schools arrange Tier-2 support in the Tiered ASD Model, i.e. supplemental small group training on social adaptive skills. The Service Providers will design and implement various training elements in accordance with the special needs of the students in the group to enhance their social cognition, interpersonal communication, emotional regulation and learning skills, etc. with a view to facilitating their social and learning adaptation and subsequent smooth integration into school, family and community life. Each training group will contain not more than six students with ASD. In addition to providing the training groups for students, Part 2 will also cover consultation and/or training for the related parents and teachers, and peer-mediated activities. A total of 25 service hours are provided per year. To take forward the Project, the EDB has commissioned eight NGOs² which have expertise in rehabilitation services and experience in catering for students with ASD.

6. Part 2 ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ is served on a 3-year cycle. The first batch of schools joining Part 2 have been receiving the support services for three consecutive years starting from the 2021/22 school year. At present, there are only a few places left for non-participating

¹ Depending on the schools’ situation, the number of students to be supported may be increased or decreased.

² The eight NGOs are Caritas – Hong Kong, Heep Hong Society, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited, Hong Kong Young Women’s Christian Association, New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, SAHK, The Salvation Army, and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (in alphabetical order).

schools to apply for support under Part 2 for the remaining two years of this cycle (i.e. 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years). Schools intending to apply for support under Part 2 are advised to join Part 1 ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ concurrently, in order that a more comprehensive support condition can be bestowed on them.

Application

7. In principle, all public sector primary and secondary schools are eligible to apply for Part 1 and/or Part 2 of the Tiered ASD Project. Interested schools are requested to bring this circular memorandum to Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Special Educational Needs Support Teacher(s) and supporting professionals (e.g. school-based educational psychologist and speech therapist) for perusal. With agreed understanding of the school personnel, schools which are willing to implement the ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ and/or the ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ according to the requirements set out in Appendix I of this circular memorandum should complete and return the application form in Appendix II by fax to Educational Psychology Service (New Territories West) Section on or before 31 March 2022. Owing to limited quota, we will accord priority to schools with relatively more students with ASD. The results of the application will be released in late April 2022. All schools which enrolled in the ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ (2021/22 to 2022/23 school years) and/or the ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ in the 2021/22 school year do not need to apply again.

8. For schools that are not selected for the ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ or ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ in the 2022/23 school year, please encourage teachers and the school personnel to make reference to the Operation Manuals and Resource Packages of the ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with ASD’, and the small group training resources of the JC A-Connect Project (Primary School and Secondary School versions), and to seek professional advice from the school-based educational psychologist on the use of evidence-based intervention strategies to support students with ASD. The Operation Manuals and Resource Packages³ have been distributed to schools and uploaded to the EDB website (<https://sense.edb.gov.hk/en/types-of-special-educational-needs/autism-spectrum-disorder/resources/teaching-resources/>) and the JC A-Connect webpage (<https://www.socsc.hku.hk/JCA-Connect/resource-package/?lang=zh-hant>).

9. The EDB issues a circular memorandum in February to March every year to release the details of the new round of ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’, and will continue to invite interested schools to make application. The next round of school recruitment in the ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ will be conducted in March 2024 tentatively.

³ The Operation Manuals and Resource Packages for primary, junior and senior secondary school students were distributed to schools and uploaded to the EDB website in 2015, 2018 and 2021 respectively.

Briefing sessions

10. The EDB will organise briefing sessions using Zoom titled **‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)’ Project – Practical strategies for supporting students with ASD: School-based experience and case sharing**’ for secondary schools and primary schools (See Appendix III for rundown) on 14 March (Monday) and 15 March 2022 (Tuesday) respectively. In order to facilitate schools’ better understanding of the model, the school-based implementation experience and efficacy of the support model through case study will be shared. A needs assessment tool with local norm launched this year, namely ‘Learning, Social and Emotional Adaptation Questionnaire (Second Version)’, will also be introduced. For details of the briefing sessions and enrolment, please refer to Training Calendar Course ID SE0020220121 (<https://tcs.edb.gov.hk/tcs/admin/courses/previewCourse/forPortal.htm?courseId=SE0020220121&lang=en>). The deadline for application is 10 March 2022.

Enquiry

11. For enquiries, please contact any responsible officer below:

Project Officer	:	Ms Eliza CHAN	(Tel. No.: 2437 7271)
Project Officer	:	Ms LAU Suk-kau	(Tel. No.: 2437 7290)
Executive Assistant	:	Mr Kavan CHU	(Tel. No.: 2437 7269)

Gloria LI
for Secretary for Education

Project on ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)’ –Responsibilities of Schools

Part I: ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’

Schools participating in the ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ are required to assign the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) / Special Education Needs Support Teacher(s) (SENST) to coordinate and facilitate the overall operation of the ASD Project in order to provide comprehensive developmental, preventive and remedial support services for students with ASD, and make corresponding arrangements in teaching and manpower deployment to create room for school personnel to try out the assessment tools and intervention strategies in the Project, including:

- (i) motivating class and subject teachers to optimize whole class support strategies (Tier-1 support) to cultivate an ASD friendly learning environment in regular classes;
- (ii) assigning designated school personnel to provide supplemental evidence-based small group training (Tier-2 support) for students with ASD in order to strengthen their social adaptive skills;
- (iii) promoting teachers to administer assessment tools to systematically identify students’ individual learning needs and design corresponding IEPs (Tier-3 support), as well as arranging designated school personnel to provide support across three tiers, including one-on-one training, for students with ASD;
- (iv) involving related teachers and designated school personnel in students’ IEP conferences so that they could collaborate on the design of the 3-tier support strategies, and evaluate students’ progress regularly to inform the need to amend the IEPs, where appropriate;
- (v) involving teachers and designated school personnel in related working meetings, professional development and inter-school network sharing activities to boost their confidence and enhance their capability to support students with ASD;
- (vi) encouraging the school-based educational psychologist to collaborate with the team of educational psychologists of the EDB enthusiastically to ensure the sustainable development of the AIM Model at school; and
- (vii) assigning designated school personnel to maintain close communication with parents and share with them the effective intervention strategies to foster good home-school collaboration.

Part II: 'NGO-School Collaboration'

Schools joining Part 2 shall assist the Service Providers to systematically gather the support needs of the students so that the trainers can design appropriate small group training contents for the related students. Besides, schools shall assign at least one regular and designated school personnel (preferably a member of the Student Support Team) to participate in each training session for the students. Through observation, participation, trying out and refinement of the various effective strategies implemented in the small group training, the school personnel will be equipped to help the students apply the skills learnt in the small group training to the regular classroom and authentic situation. The efficacy of learning of the students will then be improved, and the application and development of the strategies and skills at school will be sustained.

The EDB will deploy educational psychologists and designated officers to review the training activities delivered by the Service Providers. They will observe the training conducted at school, have exchanges with the trainers and school personnel, as well as provide consultative services to the trainers, as appropriate. Schools are responsible for jointly monitoring the quality and efficacy of the small group training with the EDB through review of the appropriateness of the teaching materials and contents of each set of training activities.

**Project on ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ’
Application Form**

Please complete the application form and return by fax (fax number: 2416 2478) to
Educational Psychology Service (New Territories West) Section on or before 31 March 2022.

We intend to join the Project on ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with ASD’ (Please tick the appropriate box. Schools may choose to join Part 1 or Part 2, or both parts of the Project)

- Part 1: ‘School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support’ (2022/23 to 2023/24 school years)
The related team of our school (including educational psychologist, * Ms / Mrs / Mr _____), has discussed and agreed to implement Part 1 of the Project according to the requirements set out in Appendix I of this circular memorandum.

** please delete as appropriate*

- Part 2: ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ (it is on a 3-year cycle, this cycle has started since the 2021/22 school year. Schools joining Part 2 in the 2022/23 school year will be provided with support for the remaining two school years, i.e. the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. Please refer to para 6 of this circular memorandum for details.)

The respective team of our school has discussed and agreed to implement Part 2 of the Project according to the requirements set out in Appendix I of this circular memorandum.

In the 2021/22 school year, the number of students diagnosed to have ASD or suspected with ASD and waitlisted for assessment are as follows :

	Lower Primary			Upper Primary			Junior Secondary			Senior Secondary			Total
	P.1	P.2	P.3	P.4	P.5	P.6	S.1	S.2	S.3	S.4	S.5	S.6	
(i) No. of students diagnosed with ASD													
(ii) No. of students suspected to have ASD and waitlisted for assessment													
Total (i)+(ii):													

Contact person : _____

Post : _____

Contact number : _____

E-mail address : _____

Signature of School Head : _____

Name of School Head : _____

Name of school : _____

Telephone No. : _____ Fax No. : _____

E-mail address : _____

Date : _____

School Chop

Project on ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)’

Practical strategies for supporting students with ASD: school-based experience and case sharing

Briefing session for secondary schools

(Training Calendar Course ID SE0020220121--Event AB)

Date : 14 March 2022 (Monday)

Time : 2:15 pm to 4:45 pm

Mode : Real time sharing using Zoom



Briefing session for primary schools

(Training Calendar Course ID SE0020220121--Event AA)

Date : 15 March 2022 (Tuesday)

Time : 2:15 pm to 4:45 pm

Mode : Real time sharing using Zoom



Rundown

Time	Content	Speaker
2:00-2:15	Registration	-
2:15-2:45	Interpretation of students' needs	Educational Psychologist of the EDB
2:45-3:05	Needs Assessment: Introduction of 'Learning, Social and Emotional Adaptation Questionnaire' (second version)	Educational Psychologist of the EDB
3:05-4:00	Sharing on emotional support strategies	Educational Psychologist of the EDB
4:00-4:30	Briefing on the 'Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with ASD' Project	Educational Psychologist of the EDB
4:30-4:45	Questions and Answers	Educational Psychologist of the EDB