

**Education Bureau**  
**Circular Memorandum No. 35/2023**

From : Secretary for Education  
Ref. : EDB(EPS/NTW)/1-50/5(1)  
Date : 28 February 2023

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

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**Application for joining the Project on**  
**‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for**  
**Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder’**  
**2023/24 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 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 strategically 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 2023/24 school year to enhance the support for students with ASD.

**Details**

2. The Tiered ASD Project comprises 2 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 6 to 8 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 3 to 4 target students<sup>1</sup> 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 Plans (IEPs) with 3 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, as well as giving them suggestions on the selection and deployment of effective intervention strategies, providing and facilitating schools' 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 and training 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 support schools to 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 the 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 6 students with ASD. In addition to providing the training groups for students, the support will also cover consultation and/or training for the related parents and teachers, and peer-mediated activities. The total service hours per each set of support activities in each year is 25 hours. To take forward the Project, the EDB has commissioned 8 NGOs<sup>2</sup> which have expertise in rehabilitation services and experience in catering for students with ASD.

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the schools' situation, the number of students to be supported may be increased or decreased.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

6. 'NGO-School Collaboration' is served on a 3-year cycle. Schools of the first batch have started to receive the support services for 3 consecutive years since the 2021/22 school year. As such, there are only a few number of places left for new schools to apply for the support under this part at present. Schools intending to apply for support in this Part of the Project are advised to also join Part 1 'School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support', 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 only one part or both Part 1 and 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. Schools which have obtained the consensus of school personnel and are willing to discharge the duties 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 2023. Owing to limited quotas, we will accord priority to schools with relatively more students with ASD. The results of the application will be released in late April 2023. Schools which have enrolled in the 'School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support' (2022/23 to 2023/24 school years) and/or the 'NGO-School Collaboration' 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 2023/24 school year, please encourage teachers and 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'<sup>3</sup>, and the small group training resources of the JC A-Connect Project (Primary School and Secondary School versions), as well as 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 related resource packages have been distributed to schools and uploaded to the EDB 'SENSE' 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 will issue 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 to invite interested schools to make application. The next round of school recruitment of the 'NGO-School

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

Collaboration' will be conducted in March 2024 tentatively.

## **Briefing sessions**

10. The EDB will organise briefing sessions for secondary schools and primary schools (See Appendix III & IV for rundown) on 14 March 2023 (Tuesday) and 15 March 2023 (Wednesday) respectively. The theme of the briefing sessions is on practical strategies for supporting students with ASD displaying emotional difficulties. Through case studies/strategy illustration, the speakers will help school personnel further understand the emotional difficulties of students with ASD and the related support skills. In order to facilitate school personnel to have a better understanding of the support model, the school-based implementation experience and efficacy of the Tiered ASD Project will also be shared in the briefing sessions. For details of the briefing sessions and enrolment, please refer to Training Calendar Course ID SE0020230146 (<https://tcs.edb.gov.hk/tcs/admin/courses/previewCourse/forPortal.htm?courseId=SE0020230146&lang=en>) for secondary school session or SE0020230158 (<https://tcs.edb.gov.hk/tcs/admin/courses/previewCourse/forPortal.htm?courseId=SE0020230158&lang=en>) for primary school session. The deadline for application is 10 March 2023.

## **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)

(Mandy HO)  
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 actively 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 the 'NGO-School Collaboration' shall assist the trainers from 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 strategies implemented in the small group training, the school personnel will be equipped to help the students apply the skills learnt 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 effectiveness 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 2023.

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’ (2023/24 to 2024/25 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 the Circular Memorandum No. 35/2023.

*\* please delete as appropriate*

Part 2: ‘NGO-School Collaboration’ (it is on a 3-year cycle, this cycle has started in the 2021/22 school year. Schools joining in the 2023/24 school year will be provided with support for the remaining one school year, namely the 2023/24 school year. Please refer to para 6 of the Circular Memorandum No. 35/2023 for details.)

The related 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 the Circular Memorandum No. 35/2023.

In the 2022/23 school year, the number of students diagnosed to have ASD or suspected with ASD and waitlisted for assessment are as follows :

	Junior Primary			Senior 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 : \_\_\_\_\_

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**Project on ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for  
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder’**  
**Briefing Session (Secondary Schools)**

**Supporting Secondary Students with ASD to cope with Emotional Difficulties**

Date : 14 March 2023 (Tuesday)

Time : 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Venue : 101, Sham Mong Road, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

School Hall of Sham Shui Po Government Primary School

Enrolment: Please refer to Training Calendar Course ID: SE0020230146

Rundown

<b>Time</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
14:00 – 14:15	Registration	-
14:15 – 15:00	Emotional Difficulties of Secondary School Students with ASD	Educational Psychologist of the EDB
15:00 – 15:10	Break	
15:10 – 16:25	School-based case experience sharing	
16:25 – 16:45	Briefing on the ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with ASD’ Project	
16:45 – 17:00	Questions and Answers	



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

**Briefing Session (Primary Schools)**

**Supporting Primary Students with ASD to cope with Emotional Difficulties**

Date : 15 March 2023 (Wednesday)

Time : 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Venue : 2 Shing Mun Road, Tsuen Wan

School Hall of Si Yuan School of the Precious Blood

Enrolment: Please refer to Training Calendar Course ID: SE0020230158

Rundown

<b>Time</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
14:00 – 14:15	Registration	-
14:15 – 14:45	Emotional regulation difficulties for students with ASD  Cognitive Behavioral Model	Educational Psychologist of the EDB
14:45 – 16:15	The Homunculi Approach  My Emotional Regulation Magic Tools	
16:15 – 16:45	Briefing on the ‘Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with ASD’ Project	
16:45 – 17:00	Questions and Answers	