

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM No. 216/2023

From: Permanent Secretary for Education
Ref.: EDB(EPS/K1)/1-50/1
Date: 8 December 2023

To: Supervisors and Heads of all public-sector schools (including government, aided, caput and special schools) and Direct Subsidy Scheme primary and secondary schools

One-off Grant for Mental Health at School

Summary

This circular memorandum (“CM”) informs all public-sector schools (including government, aided, caput and special schools) and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (“DSS”) of the details about the disbursement of the “One-off Grant for Mental Health at School” (“the Grant”).

Background

2. All along, the Education Bureau (“EDB”) has attached great importance to students’ healthy development. The pandemic has brought to our society unprecedented challenges in the past few years. As schooling and social life resume normality, it takes time for students to gradually adapt to all the changes. EDB issued a circular memorandum on 9 November 2023 to strongly advise schools to put the protection of students’ well-being and mental health as their first priority, encourage teachers to take care of students’ mental health. To allow flexibility for schools to arrange related support and activities, EDB will disburse a “One-off Grant for Mental Health at School” as additional resources for schools, to help students adjust to the changes and impacts brought by the pandemic, facilitate students to have more in depth communications and interactions with their peers and teachers, as well as enhance the sense of connectedness between various stakeholders in schools, thereby enhancing the mental health of students and school personnel.

Details

3. In order to help schools create a caring and positive culture, set up a learning environment where students feel safe, relaxed and accepted, and promote students’ mental health more effectively and flexibly, EDB will provide the Grant of \$60,000 for each public-sector school and DSS school in the 2023/24 school year to implement school-based measures that can enhance the mental health of students and teachers. Schools may deploy the Grant in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 school years to conduct various mental health promotion activities or programmes for students and teachers (e.g., organising “Mental Health Day”, designing mental health promotion learning and teaching resources and providing emotional health intervention group services), seminars, workshops or courses, set up “Mental Health Corner” or “Mental Health Room”, etc.

Principles for the Use of the Grant

4. Schools may deploy the Grant to procure services/ products from suppliers and/ or individual speakers or experts for the provision of mental health promotion activities or programmes for students and teachers. To ensure the quality of the activities or programmes, schools are required to observe the

following principles in selecting suppliers:

- (i) Schools should, in light of the school's context, procure mental health promotion activities, programmes or support services for students and teachers with suitable modes of delivery to cater for different needs of students and teachers; and
- (ii) Any procurement of items, furniture, equipment, activities or services must be in line with the principle of the promotion of mental health for students and teachers.

5. Schools should deploy the Grant for organising activities or programmes that are related to the promotion of mental health for students and teachers. If schools deploy the Grant to procure services from individual speakers or experts, they should ensure that the speakers and experts concerned possess relevant expertise.

6. In procuring relevant services, items, furniture and equipment, schools are reminded to refer to the Points to Note in the Purchase of Goods/ Services in EDB Circular No. 3/2022 "Acceptance of Advantages and Donations by Schools and their Staff" and follow the procurement procedures listed therein. Aided schools (including special schools) and caput schools are also required to follow the procedures and guidelines promulgated in EDB Circular No. 4/2013 "Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools" and "Guidelines on Procurement Procedures in Aided Schools (June 2023)", while government schools should follow the store and procurement guidelines promulgated in relevant EDB Internal Circulars. DSS schools should follow the guidelines on procurement procedures of aided schools, or the school-based procurement policies formulated upon the endorsement of their School Management Committee ("SMC")/ Incorporation Management Committee ("IMC").

7. In deploying the Grant, taking into consideration the actual situation of the schools or the benefit of cost-effectiveness, schools may collaborate with other schools (such as forming clusters with other schools under the same school sponsoring bodies or in the vicinity) to jointly organise mental health promotion activities or programmes. One of the schools in the cluster should be responsible for carrying out the procurement exercise and the co-operation details should be agreed among all schools concerned. Apportionment of expenditure can be based on the proportion of planned number of participating students or teachers of individual schools. Each school should pay to the supplier/ speaker/ expert separately in accordance with the apportionment ratio of expenditure specified in the agreement. Transfer of funding from one school to another for payment is not allowed.

8. The Grant should **not** be used for any purposes other than the procurement of items, furniture, equipment, activities or services that are related to the promotion of mental health for students and teachers stated in paragraphs 4 to 6 of this CM, such as:

- (i) organising activities which are not directly related to the promotion of mental health for students and teachers, such as students' homework guidance group and teachers' interest class;
- (ii) employing teaching or non-teaching staff; and
- (iii) subsidising activities that take place overseas.

The above examples are by no means exhaustive. Schools should deploy the Grant in a prudent manner and ensure compliance with the principles and purposes governing the use of the Grant.

9. Schools may deploy the Grant to pay the expenses on refreshment for the activities but these expenses should not exceed 10% of the disbursed amount of the Grant.

Disbursement Arrangements

10. Application is **not** required. The One-off Grant of \$60,000 for each public-sector school and DSS school will be disbursed in December 2023. For government schools, the Grant will be provided in the form of budget allocation under a designated user code. For other schools receiving government subvention (including aided schools, caput schools, special schools and DSS schools), the Grant will be credited to the schools' EDB Grant Payment Accounts.

Financial and Accounting Arrangements

11. Schools are required to observe the established principles and requirements on the use of public funds promulgated by EDB when using the Grant. All schools receiving the Grant should keep a separate ledger account to properly record all income and expenditure of the Grant. All books of accounts, receipts, payment vouchers and invoices must be kept for at least 7 years by schools for accounting and auditing purposes. Aided schools (including special schools), caput schools and DSS schools should adhere to EDB's requirements on submission of annual audited accounts set out in the relevant CMs/ letters as well as their appendices in preparing ledger accounts and annual accounts. EDB may request schools to provide relevant documents for auditing the use of the Grant if necessary. Schools shall ensure the effective use of the Grant, all of which should be spent on the related expenses of mental health promotion activities or programmes for students and teachers in accordance with the principles set out in paragraphs 5 to 10 above. Schools failing to provide relevant documents for auditing or not spending the Grant according to the ambit stated in this CM will be required to return the disbursed amounts to EDB.

12. Schools should manage their financial expenditure in a prudent manner. Aided schools should note that the Grant is outside the Operating Expenses Block Grant ("OEBG")/ the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant ("EOEBG"). If a deficit is incurred by aided schools, it can be borne by the EOEBG/ surplus under the General Domain of OEBG as appropriate. DSS schools and caput schools can deploy government funds or non-government funds to cover the deficit. For government schools, the expenditure must not exceed the allocation in the respective financial year. They may use the surplus under the Expanded Subject and Curriculum Block Grant to top up the Grant, if necessary. Transfer of the Grant and/or its unspent balance to any other accounts is not allowed in all schools.

13. Public-sector schools and DSS schools may use the Grant across school years from the 2023/24 school year to the end of the 2024/25 school year. Schools may carry forward the unspent balance of the Grant for use in the subsequent school year/ financial year until **31 August 2025**. Schools have to return the completed "Report on the Use of the Grant" (**Annex 1**) to the Educational Psychology Service (Kowloon 1) Section of EDB on or **before 30 September 2025**. While schools are not required to submit copies of invoices and receipts of the expenditure items, they should properly use the Grant in accordance with the above said principles and file related financial records and documents for auditing and inspection when necessary. For aided schools, caput schools and DSS schools, any unspent balance of the Grant as of 31 August 2025 will be clawed back by EDB based on the "Report on the Use of the Grant". As for government schools, the period for using the Grant is the same as that of aided schools (**until 31 August 2025**), and any unspent balance will lapse immediately after the period for the use of the Grant.

Evaluation and Accountability

14. Schools are required to observe the relevant guidelines issued by EDB when using the Grant and be accountable for its use. According to the principle of school-based management, schools should draw up an implementation plan on the use of the Grant and incorporate the plan into the Annual School Plan for

submission to their SMC/ IMC for endorsement. Schools should also evaluate the use of the Grant on a regular basis and include the report on its use with details of the subsidised items or activities, relevant expenses and the evaluations in the Annual School Report for submission to their SMC/ IMC for endorsement. For the sake of greater transparency and in accordance with the established arrangements, the Annual School Plan and School Report (incorporating the implementation plan and report on the use of the Grant respectively) endorsed by their SMC/ IMC should be uploaded onto the school website.

Enquiries

15. For enquiries, please contact Ms Mandy YEUNG of Educational Psychology Service (Kowloon 1) Section at 3698 4311.

Ms Mandy HO
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections - for information

To: Permanent Secretary for Education

(Attn: Educational Psychology Service (Kowloon 1) Section, Special Education Division)

Address: Educational Psychology Service (Kowloon 1) Section

Room W201, 2/F, West Block, Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education

Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Fax No.: 2715 8056

[Please complete and return this report to the Educational Psychology Service (Kowloon 1) Section of EDB on or before 30 September 2025.]

Report on the Use of the “One-off Grant for Mental Health at School”

1. Our school has spent the Grant on the following:

	Area	Actual Expenses (\$)
i.	Organising activities and programmes related to enhancing the mental health of students and teachers	
ii.	Providing support services related to enhancing the mental health of students and teachers	
iii.	Designing and producing school-based learning and teaching resources related to mental health	
iv.	Purchasing items, furniture and equipment to enhance the mental health of students and teachers	
v.	Others (please specify): _____	
	Total Expenditure	
	Unspent Balance	

2. As at 31 August 2025, the Grant

has been fully spent.

has an unspent balance of \$_____ which will be returned to EDB.
[Applicable to aided, caput and DSS schools]

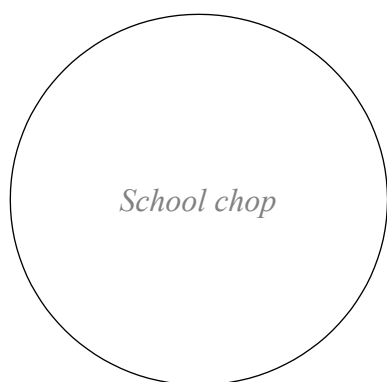
has an unspent balance of \$_____ which will lapse. **[Applicable to government schools]**

(Please put a “√” in the appropriate box)

2. Declaration

This is to certify that:

- (i) Our school has observed the principles and ambit set out in EDBCM No. 216/2023, as well as the requirements of relevant guidelines, circulars and letters issued by EDB from time to time when using the Grant and other relevant grants and subsidies. All of the expenditure is in line with the principles and purposes of using the relevant grants, and in compliance with the financial management guidelines as well as circulars and guidelines on procurement procedures applicable to our school;
- (ii) Our school has kept a separate ledger account to properly record all the income and expenditure of the Grant. All expenditure items are supported with documentary proof. All the financial records, books of accounts, receipts, payment vouchers and invoices will be kept for at least 7 years by our school for accounting and auditing purposes;
- (iii) Our school will submit the annual audited accounts (if applicable) to EDB within the prescribed period after the end of the 2024/25 school year, in which the total income and expenditure of the Grant will be recorded. In case of any discrepancy between this Report and the annual audited accounts, we will notify EDB as soon as possible for follow-up actions; and
- (iv) The information provided in this Report is true and accurate. We understand that EDB has the right to request the school to provide documentary proof of the expenditure for auditing and inspection purposes. The school is required to return the disbursed amounts that do not belong to the subsidised items of the Grant to EDB.



Name of School(Chinese)* : _____
Name of School(English)* : _____
School No. & Location No. : _____
(Format : xxxxxx-0001)
Signature of Supervisor : _____
Name of Supervisor : _____
Date : _____

* Must be identical to the name shown on the school chop