

EDUCATION BUREAU CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM No. 217/2023

From: Permanent Secretary for Education
Ref.: EDB(HSC)/1/55/12/3A(2023/24)
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 of Parents and Students

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”) which have already set up Parent-Teacher Associations (“PTAs”) of the details about the disbursement of the “One-off Grant for Mental Health of Parents and Students” (“the Grant”).

Background

2. All along, the Education Bureau (“EDB”) has attached great importance to students’ healthy development. Parents play an important role in supporting students’ growth, nurturing their positive attitude, as well as promoting their whole-person 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. To support parents in taking care of students’ mental health, EDB will disburse a “One-off Grant for Mental Health of Parents and Students” as a step-up measure to provide additional resources for students and parents, to help students adjust to the changes and impacts brought by the pandemic as well as enhancing the mental health of students and parents.

Details

3. To support parents in taking care of students’ mental health, EDB will provide the Grant of \$20,000 for the PTA of each public-sector school and DSS school in the 2023/24 school year for organising activities and training programmes relating to mental health of students and parents, so as to equip parents with the relevant knowledge and skills on mental health, and help them play the important role in identifying early signs of children’s mental health problems, understand the ways of stress management and promotion of physical and mental health, as well as the promotion of children’s positive mindset. We encourage schools to work with their PTAs to make use of the Grant in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 school years to organise various home-school co-operation activities, parent education programmes, parent-child or parent activities, sharing groups for parents or parent trainings relevant to the promotion of students’ and parents’ mental health, such as in the form of seminars, workshops, activities, courses, resource platforms, exhibitions, activity days, publications, etc. for cultivating positive family culture and enhancing the mental health of students and parents.

Principles for the Use of the Grant

4. Schools and their PTAs may deploy the Grant to procure services from service providers and/ or individual speakers or experts for the provision of mental health promotion activities or programmes for students and parents. To ensure the quality and relevancy of the programmes and activities, schools and their PTAs are required to observe the following principles in selecting service providers:

- (i) Schools and their PTAs should, in light of the school context, procure mental health promotion activities or programmes for students and parents with suitable modes of delivery to cater for different needs of students and parents; and
- (ii) Any procurement of activities or programmes must be in line with the principle of the promotion of mental health for students and parents.

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

6. In procuring relevant services, schools and their PTAs 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 and their PTAs may collaborate with other schools and their PTAs (such as forming clusters with other schools and their PTAs under the same school sponsoring bodies or in the vicinity) to jointly organise mental health promotion programmes or activities for students and parents. 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 and their PTAs concerned. Apportionment of expenditure can be based on the proportion of planned number of participating parents of individual schools and their PTAs. Each school and its PTA should pay to the service provider/ speaker/ expert separately in accordance with the apportionment ratio of expenditure specified in the agreement. Transfer of funding from one school and its PTA to another for payment is not allowed.

8. The Grant should **not** be used for any purposes other than the procurement of programmes or activities that are related to the promotion of mental health for students and parents 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 parents, such as gathering activities for parents, interest classes for parents, etc.;
- (ii) employing teaching or non-teaching staff; and
- (iii) subsidising activities that take place overseas.

The above examples are by no means exhaustive. Schools and their PTAs should deploy the Grant in a

prudent manner and ensure compliance with the principles governing the use of the Grant.

9. Schools and their PTAs may deploy the Grant to pay the expenses on refreshment for the activities, but these expenses cannot exceed 10% of the disbursed amount of the Grant.

Disbursement Arrangements

10. Application from schools and PTAs is **not** required. The One-off Grant of \$20,000 for each PTA of public-sector school and DSS school will be disbursed in December 2023. For government schools, the Grant will be paid to the Bank Account for Extra-curricular Activities Fund of the school. For other schools receiving government subvention (including aided schools, caput schools, special schools and DSS schools), the Grant will be paid to EDB Grant Payment Account of the school.

Financial and Accounting Arrangements

11. Schools and their PTAs are required to observe the established principles and requirements on the use of public funds promulgated by EDB when using the Grant. All schools and their PTAs 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 and their PTAs shall ensure the effective use of the Grant, all of which should be spent on the related expenses of the promotion of mental health for students and parents in accordance with the principles set out in paragraphs 5 to 10 above. Schools and their PTAs 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 and their PTAs 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. Government schools 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 and DSS schools and their PTAs may use the Grant across school years from the 2023/24 school year to the end of the 2024/25 school year. Schools and their PTAs may carry forward the unspent balance of the Grant for use in the subsequent school year/ financial year until **31 August 2025**. Schools and their PTAs have to return the completed "Report on the Use of the Grant" (**Annex 1**) to the Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section of EDB **on or before 30 September 2025**. While schools and their PTAs 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. 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 and DSS schools and their PTAs, any unspent balance should be returned to the Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section of EDB by crossed cheque payable to the "HKSAR Government".

Evaluation and Accountability

14. Schools and their PTAs 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 Nay CHU of Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section at 3698 4375.

Ms Mandy HO
for Permanent Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections - for information

To: Permanent Secretary for Education

(Attn: Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section, Special Education Division)

Address: Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section

Room W215, 2/F, West Block, Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education

Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

Fax No.: 2391 0470

[Please complete and return this report to the Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section of EDB on or before 30 September 2025.]

Report on the Use of the “One-off Grant for Mental Health of Parents and Students”

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

	Area	Actual Expenses (\$)
i.	Organising parent-child or parent activities relating to promotion of the mental health of students and parents	
ii.	Promoting information related to the mental health of students and parents, publications or providing resource platforms	
iii.	Providing training programmes or activities to equip parents with the knowledge and skills related to mental health	
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 and caput schools]

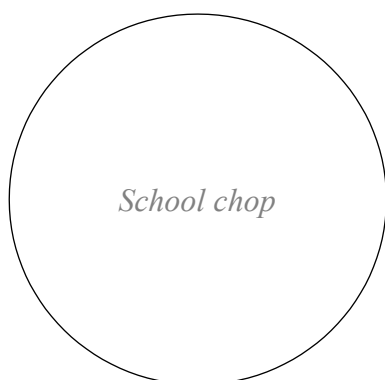
has an unspent balance of \$_____ which will be returned to the Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education Section of EDB by crossed cheque payable to the “HKSAR Government”. **[Applicable to government and DSS schools]**

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

3. Declaration

This is to certify that:

- (i) Our school/ PTA has observed the principles and ambit set out in EDBCM No. 217/2023, 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/ PTA 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/ PTA 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 : _____

Signature of Chairperson of the PTA : _____

Name of Chairperson of the PTA : _____

Date : _____

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