

Secondary School Places Allocation System 2023/2025
(For Admission to Secondary 1 in September 2025)
Frequently Asked Questions

Central Allocation Mechanism

(1) Q What are the criteria for Central Allocation (CA)?

A CA is based on a student's allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number. For allocation procedures of CA, parents may refer to the "Notes for Parents on Central Allocation" distributed by the Education Bureau (EDB) in early April 2025.

(2) Q What is the allocation procedure for CA?

A The "Unrestricted School Choices" in Part A are processed first. Only after the school choices of all students in Part A have been processed will the computer begin to process the "Restricted School Choices" in Part B.

When processing the "Unrestricted School Choices" in Part A, the computer will first allocate school places to students in Territory Band 1 according to their order of preference of school choices. After screening the school choices of all these students, the computer will follow the same procedure to process the school choices of students in Territory Band 2 and finally those of students in Territory Band 3. Students successful in obtaining a place in Part A will not be allocated a place in Part B. If a student is not allocated a school place in Part A after all his/her school choices have been exhausted, he/she will be allocated a place in Part B.

When processing the "Restricted School Choices" in Part B, the computer will first allocate school places to students in Net Band 1 according to their order of preference of school choices. If a student in Net Band 1 cannot be allocated a school place even after all his/her school choices have been exhausted, the computer will allocate a place to him/her from the remaining places in the school net¹. Until after all the students in Net Band 1 have been allocated school places, the computer will follow the same procedure to process the choices of students in Net Band 2 and finally those of students in Net Band 3.

If parents have chosen a secondary school which eventually does not offer Secondary 1 (S1) places under the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System in this allocation cycle, that school choice will not be processed².

¹ Excluding Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and schools with the remark "Students will not be allocated to this school unless they have included it in their choices".

² During the allocation procedures, the computer will omit the school choice(s) concerned and advance the subsequent school choices (if any) in the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form).

(3) Q What is the random number used for?

A The random number is generated by the computer before running the central allocation program. It is used to determine the order of allocation of students within the same allocation band. If the demand for school places of a certain secondary school exceeds the supply, the student possessing a smaller random number within the same allocation band will be allocated a place first. The random number has no connection with the “Student Reference Number” or the student’s personal data. During the allocation process, each student will be assigned one random number only. The random number will not be retained after the allocation procedure is completed.

Choice-making Exercise in Central Allocation

(4) Q When will parents receive the choice-making documents for CA?

A Parents of participating Primary 6 (P6) students of the current cycle will receive the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form) and the related choice-making documents through their children’s primary schools in early April 2025. Parents must return the completed Choice Form to EDB through their children’s attending primary schools by early May 2025. For parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users and bound their account to “iAM Smart +”³, apart from the paper Choice Form, they may submit CA application to the attending primary school via the SSPA e-Platform. Parents should not submit duplicate applications via the SSPA e-Platform and in paper form for the same child.

(5) Q What should parents take note of when filling in the Choice Form?

A Parents should consider all aspects of a school, e.g. its educational philosophy, tradition, religion, class structure, development and operation, and their children’s characteristics, personalities, abilities and interests so as to make a suitable school choice.

The Choice Form is divided into Part A and Part B. For Part A “Unrestricted School Choices”, parents may choose a maximum of three secondary schools from any school nets, including schools in their children’s own school net. As for Part B “Restricted School Choices”, parents should fill in schools from the school net to which their children belong in the order of their preference and fill up the 30 choices as far as possible. If the secondary schools they have indicated in Part A are also located in their children’s school net, they may include these schools in Part B. However, parents should not make repeated choices of the same school in the same part as this will not increase the chance of their children being allocated to the school.

Parents, when filling in Part A of the Choice Form, should refer to the “Handbook for Unrestricted School Choices” (Handbook) distributed to primary schools in early April 2025. For parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users, they may also browse the online version of the Handbook on the SSPA e-Platform. Besides, parents may also visit the EDB’s Homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) (Select: Home > Education System and Policy > Primary and Secondary Education > School Places Allocation Systems > Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System) to download the lists or call the EDB’s 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System at 2891 0088 (Press 2 (English) > 5 (Fax Services) > 04 (Secondary School Places Allocation System: School Lists)) to obtain the lists by fax. When parents fill in Part B of the Choice Form, they should refer to the “Secondary School Lists” of the school net their children belong to. Together with the Choice Forms, the “Secondary School Lists” are distributed to parents in early April 2025 for reference.

³ For details of the “iAM Smart+” registration, please visit the “iAM Smart” thematic website (<https://www.iamsmart.gov.hk>) (Select: Home > “iAM Smart” Registration > Registration Methods).

(6) Q Is it necessary for parents to complete the Choice Form in the CA stage if their children received notifications from secondary schools participating in the SSPA System (participating secondary schools) as successful discretionary places (DP) applicants?

A Whether or not students have applied for a DP of a participating secondary school (including Jockey Club Ti-I College), they must return the completed Choice Form to EDB through the primary schools or via SSPA e-Platform by early May 2025. This is to ensure that in case they have not been successful in their application to these schools, they will still be allocated an S1 place in CA.

If the parents have been notified by the participating secondary schools of their children's inclusion in the Successful Lists for Discretionary Places or their children are admitted by Jockey Club Ti-I College, they only have to tick the respective item, cross out the parts on school choices, and sign on the paper Choice Form after filling in contact information to indicate that they do not have to make school choices. For parents who submit the Choice Form via the SSPA e-Platform, they have to fill in contact information under the page for "Apply for Central Allocation", then select "Do not need to make school choices on the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form" to skip the parts on school choices in Part A and Part B, and sign digitally with "iAM Smart+", along with confirming and submitting the Choice Form.

If parents do not make any school choices and have not indicated their intention of not participating in CA on the Choice Form, and the students are neither allocated a school place at the DP stage, nor admitted by Jockey Club Ti-I College/Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary schools not participating in the SSPA System (NDSS secondary schools), the students will be allocated school places according to the established allocation mechanism.

Allocation Bands

(7) Q How are the allocation bands determined? What are they used for?

A Students get their allocation bands according to their scaled internal assessment (IA) results. Students' IA results at the end of Primary 5, and both in mid-year and at the end of P6 will be standardised, and scaled by the average of the sampled results of the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test (Pre-S1 HKAT) 2018 and 2024 of the school. For the schools which do not have the sampled results of the Pre-S1 HKAT 2018 or 2024 (e.g. a newly participating school), the average of the sampled results of all participating primary schools in the same school net in the test in that particular year will be used for scaling.

For the allocation of school places in Part A "Unrestricted School Choices" of CA, the scaled marks of all students in the territory will be put into an order of merit. Then the students will be equally divided into three Territory Bands, each consisting of one-third of the total number of primary students in the territory. As regards allocation of school places in Part B "Restricted School Choices" of CA, the scaled marks of all students within the same school net will be put into an order of merit. Then the students will be equally divided into three Net Bands, each consisting of one-third of the total number of primary students in the school net.

While Territory Band is used to determine the order of allocation of a student for unrestricted school places in Part A of CA, Net Band is for allocation of restricted school places in Part B of CA. Allocation band is not an absolute standard for assessing P6 students' academic performance, and the allocation band of individual students will not be retained after the allocation procedure is completed.

(8) Q If a student is approved for cross-net allocation, how is his/her Net Band determined in the new school net? Will there be any changes to his/her Territory Band?

A For a student approved for cross-net allocation, the scaled marks he/she obtained in the school in his/her original school net will be compared with the scaled marks of the students in the new school net to determine the Net Band he/she belongs to. In other words, the student's Net Band in the new school net may be different from that in his/her original school net. As for the student's Territory Band, it will not be changed due to the approval for cross-net allocation.

School Net

(9) Q What is School Net? How are the secondary school nets demarcated?

A In line with the district administration boundaries, the whole territory is divided into 18 secondary school nets for the allocation of school places as CA in Part B is done by school net. Each school net comprises all the participating primary and secondary schools physically located in the district and a number of different types of secondary schools in other districts providing school places for the net. The secondary schools and schools places from other districts may vary from year to year. According to the existing policy, except for those students whose applications for cross-net allocations are approved, in principle, the secondary school net to which a student belongs is determined by the physical location of the primary school the student attends, not the district where the student resides.

(10) Q How are school nets arranged?

A Provision of public sector secondary school places is planned on a territory-wide basis. To ensure an adequate supply of school places to meet the demand and to provide students with more school choices in districts with a smaller number of school places, netting of school places from neighbouring areas is a long-established arrangement which can also address the concerns and needs of different stakeholders. When making netting arrangements, EDB takes into consideration a basket of factors, such as the demand and supply of school places in different districts, location of schools and the associated transport facilities as well as the established netting pattern, to ensure a sufficient supply of school places in each district and provide parents with more choices. We will, in consultation with the Secondary School Places Allocation Committee, draw up the netting arrangements of a respective year after due consideration of stakeholders' views regarding the arrangements under the SSPA System.

The number of secondary schools and school places provided from other districts may vary from year to year according to the demand and supply situation. Parents should refer to the "Secondary School Lists" distributed every year by EDB for the netting arrangements for the cycle concerned.

(11) Q Will the number of unused school places after the DP stage, as shown in the related documents of CA which begins in April 2025, be updated to facilitate parents' choice of schools at the CA stage?

A At the DP stage, some students may receive notifications of their successful DP applications from two participating secondary schools and they will eventually be allocated to schools of their first choice according to the existing SSPA mechanism, leaving one school place unoccupied. Besides, some successful applicants may relinquish the DP allocated to them and accept the places offered by NDSS secondary schools. The places allocated to these successful DP applicants will also be rendered available. Under the existing SSPA mechanism, some students may be allocated with these unused DP in the capacity of reserve applicants and the remaining places will be used for the CA. The CA related documents have to be printed in March 2025 for distribution to parents for their reference in April 2025. Hence, it is not feasible to update the number of school places concerned due to the tight schedule.

(12) Q What is cross-net allocation?

A The allocation of school places for Part B of CA is done by school net and the school net to which a student belongs is in principle the school net of the primary school he/she attends. If there is a genuine need for a student, with special reasons, to change school net, parents may submit an application for cross-net allocation together with relevant proof documents to EDB through the primary school their child is attending before late February 2025. The primary school would forward all verified copies of application documents to EDB for further processing. For parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users and bound their account to “iAM Smart +”, apart from the paper application form, they may submit application for cross-net allocation via the SSPA e-Platform. Parents should not submit duplicate applications via the SSPA e-Platform and in paper form for the same child. If the student is approved for cross-net allocation to the school net which his/her Hong Kong residential address (i.e. a dwelling place at which the applicant student resides and which constitutes his/her sole or main home) belongs to, he/she will participate in Part B of CA in the new school net.

(13) Q What should parents take note of when declaring the applying student’s residential address and providing relevant proof documents if they wish to apply for cross-net allocation?

A Parents should note that the applying student’s residential address should be his/her sole or chief residential address in Hong Kong, i.e. a dwelling place at which the applicant student resides and which constitutes his/her sole or main home. Acceptable Hong Kong residential address proof documents include stamped tenancy agreement, demand note for rates and/or government rent, tenancy agreement or tenant’s rent card issued by the public housing authorities, residential telephone/home broadband bill, and the bills from various utility companies, like Towngas, Hong Kong Electric Company Ltd., Water Supplies Department, etc. Other documents such as bank’s statements, mobile phone bills, court summons and tax demand notes will not be accepted. Besides, the name and address of the parent (i.e. the payee) must be printed on the Hong Kong residential address proof document.

(14) Q If students have applied for DP to one or two secondary schools before they apply for cross-net allocation, and have cancelled their DP application(s) because of their cross-net application, do their parents have to fill out the Choice Form at the CA stage?

A Under the existing SSPA mechanism, students may cancel one or both of their DP applications if they need to apply for cross-net allocation. If they have cancelled one or both of their DP applications because of their cross-net application, even if they have been notified as successful applicants under the notification arrangements, the DP concerned will automatically be cancelled. If all the DP offered by participating secondary schools have been cancelled because of cross-net application, the parents concerned will have to fill out the Choice Form so that their children can participate in the CA. If the parents concerned do not make any school choices on the Choice Form and the students concerned have not been offered a school place by any NDSS secondary schools, the students concerned will be allocated with a school place according to the established allocation mechanism.

School Places Allocation Section
Education Bureau
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