

29 April 2024

## **Education Bureau Circular No. 14/2024**

### **Inspection and Maintenance of School Premises**

[Note: This Circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of all aided schools (including special schools), schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme and caput schools – for action; and
- (b) Heads of Sections – for information.]

#### **Summary**

This circular serves as a reminder to all aided schools, schools under Direct Subsidy Scheme and caput schools about the importance of carrying out regular inspection and maintenance of school premises and their responsibilities. Heads of schools are requested to pay attention to the content of this circular and remind all staff responsible for and involved in inspection and maintenance of school premises to familiarise themselves with this circular and relevant Guidelines.

#### **Background**

2. In accordance with Clause 5 of the Education Regulations (Cap. 279A), schools shall ensure that all school premises shall at all times be kept in a satisfactory state of repair. As the party primarily responsible for upkeeping the condition of school premises, schools are obliged to arrange regular inspection of their school premises and take prompt actions to keep the buildings including the associated slopes in good condition.

#### **Aided Schools**

3. The “**School Administration Guide**” which can be found in the Education

Bureau (EDB)'s website (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/regulations/sch-admin-guide/index.html>) explains that aided schools are responsible for the maintenance of school premises, and relevant government departments would provide them with necessary professional support. The Guide provides guideline on the maintenance of school premises, including recommendations on setting up a committee, preferably led by a senior teacher, to look after the safety, security, repair and maintenance of school premises; and stipulates that school heads should arrange regular inspection of the school premises and take prompt actions to keep the building in good condition.

4. Aided schools may use the recurrent subventions provided by the Government to carry out small-scale repair works of school premises as appropriate, and apply for non-recurrent subventions from the Government to carry out repair works of larger scale and more complicated nature which require additional funds and professional input. Aided schools should proceed with the necessary actions in accordance with the prevailing mechanisms, as highlighted below -

- (a) schools should carry out routine maintenance and minor repair works soonest possible with the expenditure, if any, charged to the recurrent subventions as appropriate (e.g. School and Class Grant under Operating Expenses Block Grant or Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant); and
- (b) for repairs items each costing at or above a specified threshold, schools may apply for non-recurrent subventions to carry out the required repairs works through emergency repairs (ER) or major repairs (MR). The current threshold is \$3,000 for primary and special schools and \$8,000 for secondary schools, which shall be adjusted to \$6,000 and \$10,000 respectively with effect from 2024/25 school year. The threshold is subject to review and adjustment by EDB from time to time.

5. For submission of ER requests, aided schools can refer to the “**Guidance Notes for Submission of Emergency Repairs (ER) Requests by Aided Schools**” which is available at EDB's website (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/sch-premises-info/sch-premises-maintenance/index.html>). The Guidance Notes provides details on the application procedures and a list of examples of ER for reference by aided schools. Aided schools are advised to inspect the school premises regularly and submit ER requests timely. ER projects are expected to commence and complete as soon as possible.

6. The MR mechanism is set out in the Codes of Aid. Codes of Aid for primary schools, secondary schools and special schools can be obtained from EDB's website (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/regulations/codes-of-aid/index.html>).

Annual circular memorandum will be issued to invite aided schools the submission of MR applications every year. Aided schools are advised to refer to the details in the circular memorandum before submitting their MR applications and the details in the approval letters after the applications are approved. MR projects are expected to be completed within the same MR cycle (i.e. completed before the next round of MR application in the following year). **Schools with uncompleted MR projects might be accorded with lower priorities among new applications in the coming MR cycles.**

7. Aided schools are obliged to **act in a timely manner**, viz. carrying out regular inspection, promptly arranging required repair works, making timely applications for repairs works, and taking all necessary measures to facilitate the contractors and consultants appointed by EDB to take forward the approved ER and MR projects within reasonable time. Failure to do so would be taken into consideration in processing future repair requests.

### **Schools under Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS)**

8. For DSS schools, expenditure for maintenance and repairs items costing \$2 million or below should be covered by recurrent DSS subsidies disbursed to schools. For MR exceeding \$2 million, DSS schools may apply for non-recurrent subvention similar to the prevailing practice for aided schools. Annual invitation letter is issued to DSS schools to invite applications for capital subvention for MR and Slope Repairs. DSS schools are advised to refer to the details in the invitation letter before submitting applications and the details in the approval letters after the applications are approved.

9. DSS schools are accountable for the proper use of the approved subsidy of the repair projects and are required to monitor as well as control the progress of the repair works closely with a view to completing the projects on time and within the approved budget. DSS schools are required to spend the approved subsidy of the repair projects in 3 years' time from the date of approval letter of the subsidy, after which the under-spending subsidy might no longer be available and the school should bear the financial implications, if any, arising from any disputes between the school and its consultant(s)/contractor(s). To expedite completion and finalisation of

approved projects, schools should submit tender documents for technical vetting by the Architectural Services Department and apply for reimbursement with all the required documents in a timely manner. **Schools with uncompleted MR projects might be accorded lower priorities among new applications in the coming MR cycles.**

### **Caput Schools**

10. Expenditure for maintenance and repairs of caput schools should be included in the schools' annual estimates to be submitted to EDB for approval.

### **Enquiry**

11. For enquiries on the arrangement of maintenance and repairs works at aided schools, please contact respective Maintenance Surveyor of your district. For DSS schools and caput schools, please contact respective Senior School Development Officer of your district.

( Philip HAR )  
for Secretary for Education