

New notification arrangements on Secondary One discretionary places and distribution of school choice documents for Central Allocation

Parents of Primary Six students participating in the current (2020) cycle of the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System will receive notifications from the participating secondary schools on April 7 if their children have applied for the discretionary places (DP) of the schools concerned and have been selected as successful applicants. The parents concerned do not need to reply to the schools to say whether they accept the DP offers or not, a spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) said today (March 24).

For parents who have also successfully applied for a school place in a non-participating Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary school (NDSS secondary school) for their children, they should decide whether to retain the offer from the NDSS secondary school. If the parents concerned decide to retain the offer, they should disregard the notifications from the participating secondary schools. Their children will be allocated to the NDSS secondary school according to the established mechanism. If the parents concerned decide to decline the offer, they should notify the NDSS secondary school concerned and retrieve the signed undertaking and the original copy of the Primary 6 Student Record Form on or before April 16 in order to retain the school place successfully applied for in the DP stage.

"Students who have not been notified as successful DP applicants are required to participate in the Central Allocation," the spokesman said. Primary schools participating in the SSPA System have been informed to collect the following documents on April 3:

- Secondary One Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form);
- Notes for Parents on Central Allocation (Notes for Parents);
- Secondary School List (SSL); and
- Handbook for Unrestricted School Choices (Handbook).

Each Primary Six student will receive the Choice Form, the Notes for Parents and the SSL for the school net he or she belongs to from his or her primary school. Parents may refer to the Handbook distributed to primary schools or obtain the school lists in the Handbook through the EDB's homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) and the fax service of the EDB's automatic telephone enquiry system on 2891 0088.

To guard against the spread of COVID-19, the EDB advised that primary schools should make flexible arrangements in providing support for parents in making school choices. Schools may consider distributing the above documents

to parents by post or by prior appointment to the school for collection. Instead of organising large-scale parents' briefings, schools could consider providing parents with information or advice on school choices by phone or email.

"The Choice Form is divided into two parts (Part A and Part B). Parents should refer to the Handbook when filling in Part A 'Unrestricted School Choices' of the Choice Form and choose not more than three secondary schools from any school net (including the student's school net). As for Part B 'Restricted School Choices', parents should refer to their child's SSL and choose a maximum of 30 secondary schools according to their preference. Parents must not enter any school choices which are not in the SSL of the school net of the child in Part B since invalid school choices will not be processed," the spokesman said.

The spokesman reminded parents that prior to making school choices for their children, they should read carefully the Notes for Parents. Parents are encouraged to watch the DVD "Secondary School Places Allocation System 2018/2020 Cycle" distributed to them in October last year to understand in detail the SSPA System. Parents should also refer to the Secondary School Profiles 2019/2020 published in December last year by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation for information supplied by the secondary schools and visit the Secondary School Profiles homepage (www.chsc.hk/secondary/en) for the schools' latest developments.

"Parents must complete and return the Choice Form to their children's primary schools for submission to the EDB on or before May 13," the spokesman said.

Parents who have questions in completing the Choice Form are advised to consult their children's primary schools. Relevant information about the SSPA System and some frequently asked questions will be uploaded to the EDB's homepage (www.edb.gov.hk) on April 3 for parents' reference.

Parents may call the EDB's automatic telephone enquiry system on 2891 0088 for information by then. Further enquiries may also be directed to the School Places Allocation Section (SSPA) on 2832 7740 and 2832 7700.