

Statement by Education Bureau

Regarding comments alleging the Education Bureau (EDB) openly calling on teachers to tell lies and avoid answering controversial questions by suggesting they reply "I do not know" or "I do not understand either" when being asked questions that cannot be answered in a set of guidelines on commencement of the new school year, a spokesman for the EDB today (August 22) responded that the allegation is entirely a misinterpretation of the guidelines, which have been quoted out of context.

The spokesman said that the social incidents in recent months may affect the emotions of students and teachers, and that students may also be in emotional distress when encountering various changes in the new school year. In this connection, the EDB has compiled relevant resources to provide guidelines on how to take care of teachers' and students' emotions. The relevant suggestion is one of the points mentioned in the guidelines to help students ease their emotions. According to professional advice from psychologists, teachers need not feel obliged to provide answers for all matters currently ongoing, so as to avoid putting too much pressure on themselves. They should also avoid speculating on unverified information which might cause anxiety. Other key points in the guidelines include teachers should take care of themselves first, collect their thoughts, and remind themselves to analyse issues from different perspectives in a neutral and objective manner.

The spokesman stressed that the above-mentioned guidelines are not a teaching guide. The EDB believes that when discussing controversial issues, teachers as professional educators will consider appropriate methods which match students' learning and development stages, and adopt diversified materials and do analysis from different perspectives to help students develop rational and objective analytical and inductive skills, and to express views in a peaceful, rational, and respectful manner.

The spokesman called on individual groups or persons not to intentionally misinterpret the guidelines on managing emotions as an appeal to teachers to tell lies, which is completely unconstructive in taking care of the emotions of teachers and students.