

## EMSD responds to ICAC's arrest operation regarding suspected forgery of working experience proof to apply for registration as Grade A electrical workers

Regarding the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)'s arrest operation concerning the suspected forgery of working experience proof to apply for registration as Grade A electrical workers, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (October 23) responded as follows:

The EMSD has attached great importance to the case of suspected forgery of working experience proof to apply for registration as Grade A electrical workers and has been fully co-operating with the ICAC during the investigation. Upon learning of the case, the EMSD immediately launched an investigation in accordance with the Electricity Ordinance. It was found that some registrants obtained their registration through improper means. The EMSD therefore cancelled the registration of the Grade A electrical workers concerned in accordance with the Electricity Ordinance.

The EMSD has been conducting a robust vetting and approval process to every application for registration as electrical workers. In addition to verifying the applicant's qualification certificate and working experience proof to ensure compliance with relevant legal requirements, the EMSD also examines the related certification documents. If there is any suspicion, the EMSD will request the applicant or the issuing organisation or individual to submit additional proof for further examination. Moreover, upon learning of the case, the EMSD immediately strengthened the vetting and approval procedures including dispatching officers to the issuing organisation's office for a certification-of-documents examination in order to ascertain the applicant's working experience.

To register as a Grade A electrical worker, an applicant must possess relevant qualifications and working experience. Regarding qualifications, an applicant generally needs to hold a Certificate of the Electrician or Electrical Fitter Upgrading Course issued by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) or has passed the trade test organised by the VTC, to demonstrate that he/she has achieved the appropriate technical level. With respect to working experience, applicants generally need to have been employed as an electrical worker for at least five years, including a minimum of one year of practical experience in electrical work.

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## LCQ14: Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (non-Chinese Citizens)

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Kennedy Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (October 23):

Question:

The Exit and Entry Administration of the country announced on July 1 this year the issuance of Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (non-Chinese Citizens) (non-Chinese Permits) to non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents who make an application starting from the 10th of that month. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that since September 1, 2018, relevant Mainland authorities have further facilitated the use of the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (commonly known as Home Return Permit) by Hong Kong and Macao residents for easy application of the Home Return Permit in areas such as transport, finance, communications, education, healthcare, social security, industry and commerce, taxation and accommodation, and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare said in July this year that the measures relating to the non-Chinese Permit would be conducive to the talent exchange between the Mainland and Hong Kong and further facilitate Hong Kong's better integration into the overall development of the country and its contribution to the country's high-quality development, but it is learnt that currently holders of non-Chinese Permits are still unable to enjoy any convenience on the Mainland, including their inability to directly open bank accounts, apply for telephone cards and purchase railway tickets, whether the authorities will seek to secure the wider and more convenient use of the non-Chinese Permit on the Mainland, so that holders of the permit can enjoy the same convenience afforded to holders of the Home Return Permit; if so, of the specific details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the total number of persons who have applied for non-Chinese Permits so far, their main nationalities and the situation of their use of the permit; and

(3) of the channels used by the Government to promote the non-Chinese Permit, so as to ensure that non-Chinese residents in Hong Kong who are eligible can receive the relevant information in a timely manner, and whether assistance is provided for holders of non-Chinese Permits at the relevant control points?

Reply:

President,

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) warmly welcomes and expresses gratitude to the country for issuing non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents a card-type document with five-year validity (Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (non-Chinese Citizens)) with effect from July 2024. The new measure represents a major policy breakthrough under "one country, two systems" implemented by the Mainland authorities with innovative thinking and fully highlights the unique status of the HKSAR.

Before the introduction of the new measure, foreigners (including non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents) could only go through the manual channels at control points of the Mainland with their foreign passports and fill in an arrival card each time. Even though persons of certain nationalities can enjoy visa-free access to the Mainland, they still have to use the manual channels for clearance using their passports at Mainland control points. After the introduction of the new measure, individuals holding the card-type document are able to enjoy self-service clearance at control points of the Mainland, and they are no longer required to fill in any arrival card. It has significantly enhanced clearance efficiency and facilitated access to the Mainland for business, travelling and visiting relatives by non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents.

In consultation with the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB), Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK), the Information Services Department (ISD) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD), my reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The issuance of new card-type document to non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents has significantly enhanced clearance convenience. We understand that various sectors of the community expect wider use of the new document on the Mainland. The HKSAR Government has been in close communication with relevant Mainland authorities and will continue to do so in enhancing the level of convenience of Hong Kong residents living on the Mainland, with a view to promoting better integration of the HKSAR into the overall development of the country.

(2) The application, approval, and issuance of the new card-type document fall within the remit of the Mainland authorities. According to the figures provided by the Exit and Entry Administration of the country (EEA), from July to mid-October 2024, a total of about 55 000 non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents had made appointments for application, and about 20 000 new card-type documents were issued by the EEA. The number of visitor arrivals/departures made using the card-type document amounted to a total of 53 000. Applicants mainly included nationals from European, North American, Southeast and South Asian countries.

Based on the HKSAR Government's understanding, the first batch of people who obtained and used the card-type document for travelling to the Mainland (including those from the business and school sectors) greatly welcomed the new measure. They also considered that the measure could substantially

shorten the clearance time and fully satisfy their needs for visiting the Mainland for business, academic and cultural exchanges, and travelling purposes. Some of them also said that the measure had given them a stronger sense of identity and facilitated their greater participation in the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

(3) The Security Bureau has been actively promoting the new measure together with relevant bureaux and departments, including the CEDB, InvestHK, the ISD, the HAD, as well as Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices overseas and on the Mainland, etc. Apart from promoting through various channels, including mass media and social media, we have been particularly promoting this measure to foreign chambers of commerce in Hong Kong, encouraging international talents of Hong Kong companies who are permanent residents to make use of the card-type document to better seize the opportunities of the country's rapid development, especially in the building of the GBA. In addition, we have especially introduced the measure to ethnic minorities through the eight support service centres for ethnic minorities funded by the HAD and promoted the measure to ethnic minority groups, community groups and schools, etc, through relevant District Offices in districts where more ethnic minorities live.

We have also been maintaining close communication with the Mainland authorities to ensure the smooth implementation of first-time registration for the use of this permit and clearance arrangement at Mainland control points, including the provision of more directional signs in English and additional manpower to assist card holders when necessary.

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## **EDB announces arrangements for second round of Basic Law and National Security Law Test in 2024/25 school year**

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (October 23) announced that the second round of the Basic Law and National Security Law Test (BLNST) in the 2024/25 school year will be open for application from 9am on October 25 to 5pm on November 7. The test will be held on December 15 (Sunday).

The target participants for the second round of the test are persons with a bachelor's degree or those who will attain a bachelor's degree in the 2024/25 or 2025/26 academic year and are planning to join or change to another secondary school, primary school or kindergarten to take up a teaching post. Applications can be made through the EDB's online application system ([www.edb.gov.hk/en/blnst](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/blnst)). Limited places for the test will be

available on a first-come, first-served basis. Those who have already obtained a pass result in the BLNST organised by the EDB, the Civil Service Bureau or recruiting departments/grades for degree holders will not be accepted to sit the test again.

Starting from the 2023/24 school year, all newly appointed teachers in public sector schools, Direct Subsidy Scheme schools and kindergartens joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme (including newly joined teachers and teachers changing schools) are required to pass the BLNST in order to be considered for appointment. The requirement applies to all ranks of the teacher grade including principals.

The EDB is conducting five rounds of the BLNST for degree holders and non-degree holders respectively this school year. Details are available on the EDB webpage ([www.edb.gov.hk/en/blnst](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/blnst)). The third to fifth rounds of the test will be held in April, June and July 2025 respectively. Relevant arrangements will be announced in due course.

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## LCQ11: Supporting students with special educational needs

Following is a question by the Hon Gary Zhang and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (October 23):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the support provided under the existing policy for students with special educational needs (SEN) at public sector ordinary schools is insufficient. In addition, many primary and secondary schools have relayed that due to curricula constraints, they do not have the time to take care of and support the needs of SEN students, and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) also find it difficult to cater for the needs of SEN students because of their heavy administrative workload. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current number of (i) SENCOs and (ii) Special Educational Needs Support Teachers (SENSTs) in Hong Kong, and the respective average numbers of SEN students supported by each SENCO and SENST;

(2) of the service programmes currently provided by the Government for various types of SEN students, and the average amount of subsidies received by each student;

(3) whether the Government has considered allocating additional resources to

provide accessible applied behaviour analysis trainings for students with autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) given that under the existing policy, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides pre-school support for SEN children (from birth to six years old), while the support services for school-aged SEN children over six years old are provided by schools funded by the Education Bureau, but there are views that the support services provided by the SWD and schools, as well as their effectiveness, are completely different, whether the Government will consider having the support services for SEN students provided by the SWD instead?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to supporting students with special educational needs (SEN) and has continuously introduced enhancement measures to strengthen the support for students with different SEN. The annual expenditure on integrated education has increased substantially from \$1.5 billion in the 2017-18 financial year to about \$4.1 billion in the 2024-25 financial year, representing an increase of up to 170 per cent. This reflects the great importance and long-term commitment of the Government attached to integrated education.

The consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Gary Zhang is as follows:

(1) to (2) To assist public sector ordinary schools in supporting students with SEN, the Education Bureau (EDB) provides schools with additional manpower and professional support on top of regular subvention. The EDB provides schools with the Learning Support Grant (LSG) on an annual basis based on the number of students with SEN in a school and their respective tier of support required. In the 2023/24 school year, the unit grant rates for Tier-2 and Tier-3 support are \$15,779 and \$63,116 respectively. If the total amount of the LSG reaches a specific threshold, the schools will be provided with additional regular teaching post(s), titled Special Educational Needs Support Teacher (SENST) by the EDB. Also, the post of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has been established in each public sector ordinary school. In the 2023/24 school year, there are 844 and 1 355 posts of SENCOs and SENSTs respectively within the staff establishment. Under the Whole School Approach (WSA), all teachers in a school should have the ability and the responsibility to support students with SEN, while the SENCO plays a leading role in collaborating with other teachers and professional support staff. Schools can flexibly pool together and effectively deploy the LSG as well as other resources based on the overall needs of students and according to the principle of "individual calculation and holistic deployment", including employing additional teachers and teaching assistants and hiring professional services.

Apart from additional teachers, the EDB provides schools with additional

professional support staff. At present, the School-based Educational Psychology Service has covered all public sector ordinary schools in the territory, and the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service has also been fully implemented. Besides, the EDB has launched support programmes and services to address different types of SEN so that students in need can be provided with targeted support, such as the Chinese Language Tiered Intervention Programme for students with dyslexia, the respective support programmes for students with visual impairment and hearing impairment; and the School Partnership Scheme to support ordinary schools to cater for students with intellectual disability who display severe adjustment difficulties.

(3) Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) are the major types of students with SEN. Schools can provide appropriate support for them according to their severity of SEN through the 3-tier Intervention Model, such as in-class adaptation and support, group training targeted for learning, emotional and behavioural adjustment, and individual education plan for students with severe learning or adaptation difficulties, so as to make the best use of resources and maximise the effectiveness. The EDB has also implemented the Project on "Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder". Through the "School-based Multi-Disciplinary Professional Support" and the "Non-Governmental Organisation and School Collaboration", schools are assisted in adopting evidence-based and diversified strategies to help students develop their abilities in learning, social and emotional adaptation, facilitate their integration in classroom learning and the community, unleash their potential and strengthen their life planning.

For students with AD/HD, the EDB has been developing a series of teaching resources for enhancing students' execution skills and relevant software for secondary schools to facilitate individual coaching for the students concerned. Besides, the EDB organises talks and experience-sharing sessions for school personnel on a regular basis, and provides support for primary and secondary school students, parents and teachers under the Jockey Club Keen and Active Kids Project through cross-sector collaboration with university.

Currently, there are various evidence-based support strategies to assist students with ASD and AD/HD, and applied behaviour analysis (ABA), which mainly reinforces positive behaviour using rewards, is one of them. The EDB has all along been promoting effective and evidence-based support strategies through teacher training and support programmes to enhance schools' capacity to support students. In addition, a series of learning and teaching resources that make use of information technology and interactive multimedia, such as "Video Modelling", digital interactive learning and teaching platforms, and digital learning games will be launched by phases. The elements of ABA approach have already been included in these initiatives. Schools are encouraged to deploy their resources flexibly and adopt diversified and appropriate strategies to cater for the needs of different students.

(4) The Government has been providing support services for children with

special needs through cross-sector collaboration. In brief, the Health Bureau and the Hospital Authority (HA) provide assessment and medical services; the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides pre-school rehabilitation services; while the EDB provides learning support.

Children at different stages have different needs for support. At the pre-primary level, kindergartens adopt an integrated approach of theme-based learning, enabling children to learn through a variety of games and activities based on their progress of development and learning needs. Most of the children showing slower development in individual aspects are able to gradually develop their capabilities at their own pace of personal growth. Therefore, at the pre-school level, the SWD provides subvention for non-governmental organisations to operate pre-school rehabilitation services for children with special needs under six years of age. At the primary level, students will transition to a more structured learning approach with different subjects. Schools will also gradually grasp the types of SEN of their students. By adopting the WSA, SENCos collaborate with various professionals and subject panels in the school to cater for the learning and adaptation needs of students in a holistic manner.

To enhance the effectiveness of the transition from pre-school to primary schooling, a collaborative mechanism has been put in place among the EDB, the SWD, the Department of Health and the HA to ensure that the recipient primary schools can be aware of the special needs of students progressing to Primary One early, and facilitate their integration in the learning life of primary schools. Primary schools will make appropriate support arrangements according to the actual needs of students and provide parents with the "Summary of Transition Support for Primary One Student" to help them understand the support arrangements provided by schools and make suitable complements to enhance the effectiveness and promote home-school communication.

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## Temporary closure of Tai Wo Sports Centre

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (October 23) that Tai Wo Sports Centre in Tai Po District will be temporarily closed from November 1 for repair works, which are expected to be completed in late July 2025. During the closure period, members of the public may use similar facilities at Fu Heng Sports Centre, Fu Shin Sports Centre, Tai Po Hui Sports Centre, Tai Po Sports Centre and Tung Cheong Street Sports Centre in the same district.

For the most up-to-date closure schedules of the above leisure and sports facilities, the public may refer to the notices at venue or contact



venue staff at 2656 3398.