

EDB launches consultation on extension of retirement age for newly joined aided school teachers

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (June 27) launched a consultation exercise on a proposal to extend the retirement age for newly joined teachers of aided schools from 60 to 65.

Views will be sought from the education sector and stakeholders on, among other things, the target group of the new retirement age policy and the necessary adjustments to the arrangements for government donation to teachers' provident funds. The consultation period will last until September 7.

The Consultation Document on Extension of Retirement Age for Newly-joined Aided School Teachers has been uploaded to the EDB website (www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/openconsultretireage/index.html) for public viewing.

Views can be submitted by post (Education Bureau, 2/F, Trade and Industry Tower, 3 Concorde Road, Kowloon), by fax (2520 0065) or by email (consultretirementage@edb.gov.hk).

The EDB will also conduct three open consultation sessions to gather feedback from the education sector and stakeholders. The details are as follows:

Date: July 4 (Wednesday), July 9 (Monday) and July 18 (Wednesday)
Time: 6.30pm to 8pm
Venue: Room WB, 4/F, West Block, EDB Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong
Language: Cantonese

Reservations for seats at the open consultation sessions can be made on a first-come, first-served basis on the following website: <http://survey2.hkedcity.net/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=92L07o7>. Enquiries about the open consultation sessions can be made by calling the EDB on 3467 8281 or 3467 8282.

Special traffic arrangements for race

meeting in Happy Valley

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (June 27). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Vehicles from eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements during the race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to

Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic arrangements will be implemented from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic on southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.

LCQ6: Leak of public examination papers

Following is a question by the Hon Regina Ip and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 27):

Question:

In recent years, there have been a number of incidents of suspected leak of public examination papers. Although the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has repeatedly stated that it attaches great importance to preserving the secrecy of examination papers and a mechanism is in place to tightly monitor and control the processes of design, review, printing, packing and distribution of examination papers, and that all personnel appointed or employed by HKEAA shall, under the law, preserve secrecy with regard to all matters coming to their knowledge in the performance of any function, some members of the public have indicated that they remain doubtful. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows if HKEAA, in the past three years, enhanced the mechanism for monitoring and preventing the leak of examination papers as well as for reporting suspected cases to the Independent Commission Against Corruption;

(2) whether the Education Bureau (EDB) will review the mechanism for its monitoring the performance of HKEAA; if EDB will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it knows the number of incidents of a leak of examination papers in the past five years in which HKEAA had obtained evidence on the leak; whether it has assessed if such incidents have reflected a dereliction of duty on the part of the personnel of EDB or HKEAA; if it has assessed, of the outcome?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) was set up under the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Ordinance (HKEAAO) (Hong Kong Ordinances, Cap. 261) in 1977. It is an independent statutory body. Its major function is to administer public examinations in Hong Kong and to conduct various professional and international examinations. The HKEAA utilises its own income and assets to support its daily operation according to the HKEAAO and does not receive any recurrent subvention from the

Government. It enjoys autonomy in its day-to-day operation. The members of the HKEAA are drawn from various sectors, including tertiary institutions, schools, business and the Government. Apart from ex-officio members and members nominated by the Heads of Universities Committee, other members are appointed by the Chief Executive to perform the statutory functions of the HKEAA, which include monitoring the work of its Secretariat.

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Regina Ip is as follows:

(1) The HKEAA has put in place a series of stringent measures and clear guidelines to ensure that public examinations are arranged and administered by examination personnel with strict confidentiality in accordance with the guidelines. According to Section 15 of the HKEAAO (Note), every person appointed or employed by the HKEAA shall preserve secrecy with regard to all matters coming to his knowledge in the performance of any function. Any person who contravenes the secrecy requirements commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine and to imprisonment for six months. This provision is applicable to examination personnel appointed by the HKEAA to assist in the administration of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE), including centre supervisors and invigilators nominated by school principals who are also abided by the secrecy requirements. Markers, oral examiners and other examination personnel hired by the HKEAA must sign a confidentiality agreement and declare interest when they are appointed. The HKEAA also reminds examination personnel to maintain the confidentiality requirement during briefing sessions and in the guidelines for markers/oral examiners. Fairness and confidentiality in public examinations are of the utmost importance to the HKEAA. HKEAA staff would report to law enforcement agencies according to the established mechanism and guidelines should there be any suspected cases identified.

The HKEAA has also put in place a rigorous mechanism to ensure confidentiality of examination questions. Stringent security protocols and processes of designing, reviewing, printing, packing and distributing examination papers are established and implemented on the recommendations of the Corruption Prevention Department of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Each year, the HKEAA conducts comprehensive post-HKDSE reviews on the relevant arrangements and processes. These post-examination reviews and different types of internal audits are carried out to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that different risks associated with the HKDSE can be monitored and managed at a satisfactory level. To maintain the fairness, integrity and reliability of public examinations, the HKEAA seeks and heeds advice on improvement from the Corruption Prevention Department of ICAC from time to time. For example, on the advice of ICAC, the HKEAA has enhanced the guideline on nomination of invigilators by schools for the 2018 HKDSE. School principals have been advised against nominating as invigilators any person who has any association with tutorial schools.

(2) The HKEAA is an independent statutory body, performing its statutory function to conduct public examinations in Hong Kong in accordance with the HKEAAO. The HKEAA Council is the highest governing body for making decisions on and approving major plans, budgets, policies and regulations of the HKEAA, as well as appointing senior executives of the Secretariat. It also appoints

standing committees which carry out their work in accordance with their prescribed terms of reference to support the governance of the HKEAA, or set up working groups and sub-committees to take on important tasks. The Permanent Secretary for Education or his representative serves as an ex-officio member of the HKEAA and the Education Bureau is also represented on different committees to take part in its governance. Besides, under the HKEAAO, the HKEAA is required to submit its annual estimates of income and expenditure and programme of its proposed activities to the Government for approval, and to table its annual audited accounts and report of activities at the Legislative Council every year.

The above governance structure serves to effectively monitor the daily operation of HKEAA. The HKEAA Council supervises the operation and conduct of examinations from a strategic and macro perspective. Its relevant standing committee (namely the Public Examinations Board) oversees the implementation of public examinations.

The statutory function of the HKEAA is to plan and administer public examinations. The HKEAA is committed to ensuring the conduct of public examinations in a fair, effective and reliable manner. Under the supervision of the HKEAA Council, there is a stringent and well-proven mechanism in place to monitor the conduct of public examinations. The HKEAA will continue to strictly enforce procedures to safeguard confidentiality and will report any suspected breach to law enforcement agencies according to the existing guidelines.

(3) According to the latest information provided by the HKEAA, there is no incident of suspected leak of examination questions before examinations take place since the implementation of the HKDSE in 2012, and there is no dereliction of duty on the part of any staff. As to suspected incidents of not preserving secrecy, the HKEAA pointed out that there were only one confirmed case (involving uploading the marking schemes and oral questions of the 2012 HKDSE onto a tutorial website) while the few other suspected cases had been handled by the HKEAA in accordance with the established mechanism.

Thank you, President.

Note: Section 15(1) of the HKEAAO prescribes that "every person who has been appointed under or who is or has been employed in carrying out or assisting any person to carry out the provisions of this Ordinance –

(a) shall preserve and aid in preserving secrecy with regard to all matters coming to his knowledge in the exercise or performance of any duty or function under this Ordinance;

(b) shall not communicate any such matter to any person; and

(c) shall not suffer or permit any person to have access to any records in the possession, custody or control of any person to whom this subsection applies."

S for S speaks on shooting case in Quarry Bay Park

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media briefing after attending the Legislative Council meeting this afternoon (June 27):

Reporter: Mr Lee, gun crimes are very rare in Hong Kong. Should Hong Kong people be concerned about this latest incident? Do you think that the shooting case yesterday shows we need to review the regulations of import and control of firearms?

Secretary for Security: I pay serious attention to the homicide case yesterday, in which the culprit used a genuine firearm. The Police will do a very thorough and serious investigation into the case. I have also asked the Police to look at the smuggling of the firearms into Hong Kong and see whether there are things we need to follow up. I must emphasise that in regard to the firearms control of Hong Kong, the laws are strict. Anybody who wants to possess a gun, he must get the approval from the Commissioner of Police and a license in which the conditions including the use and storage of the firearms are very clearly specified. In regard to smuggling of firearms by person or by goods, both the Immigration Department's officers and customs officers have been taking strong enforcement actions. So collectively, the law enforcement agencies exercise strict controls on the inflow of firearms into Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's crime rate is low. In 2017, the crime rate was the lowest in 46 years. Robbery cases had gone down by 35 per cent in 2017, and there was no genuine firearms robbery last year. So the Hong Kong crime situation is stable. The law enforcement agencies in Hong Kong will work hard to ensure that we remain a safe city in which the threat of firearms is prevented.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

LCQ18: Public access to records and materials of the Public Records Office

Following is a question by the Hon Charles Mok and a written reply by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, in the Legislative Council today (June 27):

Question:

Regarding public access to the holdings of the Public Records Office (PRO), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current volume of PRO's holdings; in respect of each type of holdings (including files, bound volumes, photographs, posters, maps and plans as well as films), (i) the volume of holdings and (ii) the percentage of holdings digitised;

(2) of the current means by which the public can obtain copies of PRO's holdings free of charge; whether the Government will, by making reference to the practices of the National Archives of the United Kingdom, ensure that the public can have at least one way of obtaining copies of its holdings free of charge (e.g. taking photographs of the original records directly by themselves or downloading digital files from the Internet);

(3) whether it has recently tightened the following practice: a member of the public may (i) request staff members of the PRO Search Room to print a digital file of its holdings and then (ii) take photographs of the printed copy with his/her personal digital photographic device (while the printed copy will be kept by PRO for viewing by other members of the public); if so (e.g. refusing to provide the aforesaid free printing service), of the details and its justifications for increasing the costs and difficulties of members of the public in obtaining copies of the holdings for research purposes; and

(4) as the Government has indicated that it will strive to digitise those frequently accessed and popular archival records, of the progress of the digitisation work?

Reply:

President,

The Public Records Office (PRO) of the Government Records Service (GRS) serves as the central repository for the permanent archives of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. PRO is committed to appraising and acquiring records and materials of enduring value and making them available for public access and use. It offers a rich heritage resource consisting of documents, photographs, films, posters and other archival records tracing the development of Hong Kong. Access to these holdings is managed under the Public Records (Access) Rules 1996, and members of the public are required to observe applicable regulations made to protect the records, including the "Rules on Using the Public Records Office Search Room" and other regulations on the protection of copyright, personal data, etc. Public access to archival records is free of charge. However, a fee is payable for obtaining a paper copy or digital copy of any records of the holdings. This arrangement is in line with the practice of other overseas national archives. To enhance its services to the public, PRO has since April 2009 been providing the service of "Using Personal Photographic Device in Search Room", under which the public may take photographs of the paper records of PRO's holdings free of charge with their personal photographic

devices, provided that they undertake to observe the Copyright Ordinance and that the physical condition of the holdings is suitable for photography.

Our reply to the question raised by Hon Charles Mok is as follows:

(1) PRO currently houses a total of nearly 1.5 million holdings. Among them, more than 85 000 archival records, or 5.7 per cent of all holdings, have been digitised to produce some two million digital images. The numbers of archival records and digitised holdings stored in various media are set out below:

Medium	Number of Archival Holdings (nos.)	Number of Digitised Holdings (%)
Files/Bound Volumes (Note 1)	763 400	69 300 (9%)
Photographs	15 700	6 000 (38%)
Posters	1 300	600 (46%)
Maps and plans	8 500	2 300 (27%)
Films	3 000	1 800 (60%)
Microforms (Note 2)	708 300	5 800 (0.8%)
Total	1 500 200	85 800 (5.7%)

Note 1: Only a combined total is available. We do not maintain a breakdown of individual items.

Note 2: Microfilming is an internationally recognised practice suitable for the long-term preservation of records. As the public can access microfilm records directly through a computer, the digitisation of microforms is not a priority for GRS.

(2) As mentioned above, from April 2009 onwards, the public may, under the service of "Using Personal Photographic Device in Search Room", take photographs of paper records of the PRO's holdings with their personal photographic devices free of charge for research or private study purposes. Starting from May 24 this year, the public may also obtain copies of digital records free of charge through taking photographs of images on a computer screen. The arrangements on the free service of "Using Personal Photographic Device in Search Room" have been posted in the PRO Search Room and uploaded to the GRS website for public information. Members of the public may also access digitised archival records which have been uploaded to the website and download them free of charge for research or private study purposes. Owing to reasons such as copyright considerations, some digitised archival records are not available on the GRS website for downloading by the public.

(3) PRO has always been committed to providing quality service to facilitate public access to its holdings and keeps its service under review. In the

past, arrangements were made by PRO to have the copies of digital records procured from overseas national archives printed in black and white, so that the public might obtain free copies of the digital records through taking photographs of the printed copies with their personal photographic devices. In a recent review of the service, PRO found that such practice is not only outdated but also inconsistent with those adopted by overseas national archives in handling digital records. Apart from the implications on manpower and resources, a large amount of paper (note 3) and printer toner are consumed in the production of paper copies which defeats the principle of conservation and environmental protection. As such, PRO has, starting from May 24 this year, adopted a more relaxed approach by allowing members of the public to take photographs of the images on a computer screen directly with their personal photographic devices to obtain copies of digital records free of charge, provided that they comply with applicable regulations made to protect the records, including those on copyright and personal data. This does not only shorten the time required for the public to obtain copies of holdings, but also allows them to obtain colour copies of the digital records. It also serves the purpose of environmental protection. In the long run, PRO will continue to study other measures that may facilitate public access to and downloading of archival records via the Internet.

Note 3: The average paper consumption in the past three years was about 11 200 sheets per year, while the paper consumption in first five months this year has already reached 20 000 sheets.

(4) GRS has been digitising its holdings with reference to criteria commonly adopted by overseas archival institutions (e.g. physical condition of holdings, users' demand or utilisation rate, copyright restriction, personal data consideration etc.) in order to facilitate public access to the holdings via digital means. At present, over 85 000 archival holdings have been digitised by GRS to produce about two million digital images, including about 1.3 million digital images of microfilm collections, oversized maps and architectural plans that are of greater public demand, so as to enhance public accessibility to the relevant items via digital means.

Digitisation of archival holdings is a complex process which involves a number of different steps on testing and treatment (e.g. cataloguing and quality checking of digital records, standardising equipment at regular intervals etc.). Such steps aim to ensure that the archival documents to be digitised are restored to good condition and the data therein are visibly clear before proceeding with the process. Moreover, the quality of the resultant images must also undergo stringent checking after digitisation. These tasks require substantial input of manpower and resources. The GRS plans to digitise archival holdings with high popularity first in the coming 10 years, with an annual production of about 350 000 digital images. The total number of digital images is expected to increase to 6 million items, or about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of all archival records, which is comparable to the digitisation rates of overseas archives.