

Ombudsman invites public views on Education Bureau's mechanism for approving applications for school fee revision

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, today (June 26) invited members of the public to provide information and/or views on the mechanism of the Education Bureau (EDB) for approving applications for school fee revision.

According to information published by the EDB in September 2017, a total of 147 Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS)/private/international schools had been granted approval by the EDB to increase their school fees for the 2017/18 school year. Some schools charge an annual school fee of over \$200,000. The EDB says that it has established procedures for approving applications for school fee revision submitted by DSS/private/international schools. Nevertheless, there are concerns in the community that the bureau's approval mechanism is lax and lacks transparency, such that those schools can often easily obtain approval to raise their school fees, thereby placing a heavy financial burden on parents.

Ms Lau said, "Parents have been relying on the EDB to scrutinise the schools' budgets and their justifications for fee increase. The bureau should ensure that the levels of fee increase are reasonable and protect the interests of students and their parents. If schools are at liberty to unreasonably hike their school fees year after year, that would bring about a heavy financial burden for parents to bear. We are, therefore, very concerned about whether the EDB has in place a sufficiently strict mechanism and proper procedures for approving applications for school fee revision."

The Office of The Ombudsman has initiated a direct investigation into the EDB's criteria and procedures for approving applications for school fee revision, and the bureau's regulatory system for school fees collected by schools. The Office will also examine whether there are inadequacies in the EDB's current approval mechanism and administrative procedures, with a view to making recommendations to the bureau for improvement.

To make the investigation more comprehensive, The Ombudsman now invites members of the public, particularly parents, parents' associations, the education sector and sponsoring bodies, to send information and/or views in writing to the Office of The Ombudsman by July 26, 2018:

Address: 30/F, China Merchants Tower, Shun Tak Centre, 168-200 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong
Fax: 2882 8149

First quarter 2018 issue of “Quarterly Supplement to Statistical Digest of the Services Sector” published

The first quarter 2018 issue of "Quarterly Supplement to Statistical Digest of the Services Sector" is published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) today (June 26). This issue is now available for download free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?productCode=B1080008).

The services sector is the heart of Hong Kong's economy. Accurate and detailed statistics play an important role in support of the Government's initiatives on promoting the services sector. This issue of the Quarterly Supplement provides up-to-date quarterly statistics (from the fourth quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2018) for the more important statistical series on 14 major service industries/domains of Hong Kong.

Enquiries about this publication can be directed to the Logistics and Producer Prices Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7255 or email: services@censtatd.gov.hk).

FSD holds briefing on optimising measures on processing of acceptance inspection of fire service installations

The Fire Services Department (FSD) held a briefing at the Kowloon Tong Fire Station today (June 25) on the results of the newly introduced measures to optimise the processing of acceptance inspection of fire service installations (FSIs) and equipment. Participants included stakeholders in architecture, construction and engineering industries, and representatives of private corporations and various government departments.

The briefing aimed to share the FSD's experience with the industry in

effectively conducting acceptance inspection of FSIs. The department also urged the industry to collaborate in order to expedite such processes. The FSD also put forth some best practices for acceptance inspections and document submissions during the briefing for reference by the participants.

"For the sake of optimising the process of accepting inspection of FSIs, the FSD has implemented a series of new measures and that positive feedback has been received. The department will maintain regular communication and connection with the industry in order to refine both approval and acceptance procedures," the Assistant Director of Fire Services (Licensing and Certification), Mr Leung Kwun-hong said, when concluding the briefing.

The briefing was attended by about 160 representatives from the construction industry; professional institutes of architects, engineers and surveyors; registered FSI contractors; private corporations; and related government departments.

[CE exchanges views with young scientists in Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting \(with photos\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, continued to attend the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Lindau, Germany, today (June 25, Lindau time). She spoke with young scientists and met with laureates of the Nobel Prize and the Shaw Prize.

Mrs Lam attended a seminar this morning. Together with two Nobel laureates, Professor Dr Kurt Wüthrich and Professor Dr Ferid Murad, she exchanged views with young scientists about the leadership required of scientists. Mrs Lam said that issues facing politicians and scientists may be different, but as leaders they must be diligent and perseverant as well as have team spirit. She encouraged the young scientists to be creative and curious and set clear goals for themselves. Noting that Hong Kong provides necessary support for scientific research and has a highly international environment, Mrs Lam welcomed the young scientists to go to Hong Kong to develop their careers.

Mrs Lam, accompanied by the Head of the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office, Mrs Betty Fung, then met with Professor Bruce Beutler and Professor Jules Hoffmann, who are laureates of both the Nobel and Shaw Prizes. She briefed them on Hong Kong's latest situation and invited them to visit Hong Kong.

Mrs Lam left Lindau in the morning. She departed for Beijing via Zurich in the afternoon and will arrive in Beijing tomorrow morning (June 26).

During the stay in Beijing, she will report to the Vice-Premier of the State Council, Mr Han Zheng, the views and suggestions of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and different sectors of the community on matters relating to the development plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area.



Public urged not to consume two kinds of prepackaged anchovy fillets detected with histamine

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 25) urged the public not to consume two kinds of prepackaged anchovy fillets as they were found to contain histamine. The trade should stop using or selling the affected products immediately if they possess them.

Details of the product are as follows:

(1) Product name: Filetti di Acciughe in Olio d'Olive con Tartufo (Anchovy Fillets with Truffle in Olive Oil)
Brand: TartufoLanghe
Place of origin: Italy

Net weight: 90 grams per pack
Best before date: August 31, 2018

(2) Product name: Flat Fillets of Anchovies With Capers in Olive Oil
Brand: ROCCA
Place of origin: Italy
Net weight: 100 grams per bottle
Best before date: July 31, 2019

A CFS spokesman said, "The Centre collected the two abovementioned samples from the city's super supermarket in Causeway Bay for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the samples contained histamine at levels of 220 milligram (mg) per 100 gram (g) and 260mg per 100g respectively."

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularities. The vendor has removed from shelves and stopped sale of the affected products, and initiated a recall according to CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call the vendor's hotline at 2736 3866 during office hours for enquiries about the recall," the spokesman added.

The spokesman said that histamine is commonly found in certain kinds of fish such as tuna, sardine, mackerel and anchovy, as a result of bacterial spoilage. Consumption of fish containing high levels of histamine can cause foodborne intoxication. Symptoms of histamine poisoning include tingling and burning sensation around the mouth, facial flushing and sweating, nausea, vomiting, headache, palpitations, dizziness and rash. The onset of intoxication symptoms is within a few hours after consumption and these symptoms will normally disappear in 12 hours without long term effect, the spokesman noted.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incident and will continue to monitor the case and take appropriate follow-up action. Investigation is ongoing.