

EDB arranges Home Return Permit facilitation service for students and teachers joining Mainland study tours of senior secondary subject of Citizenship and Social Development

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (February 21) announced that a one-off facilitation service will be arranged for students and teachers who will soon depart for Mainland study tours of the senior secondary subject of Citizenship and Social Development (CS) to apply for the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Home Return Permit) if they have such a need.

An EDB spokesman said, "Following the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the CS Mainland study tours will commence soon. Schools have responded positively to the arrangement with proactive preparation for the tours. However, certain schools have indicated that some students are unable to make an appointment in time to renew or apply for the Home Return Permit. In view of this, the EDB has co-ordinated with China Travel Service Entry Permit Service Hong Kong Limited (CTS) to arrange a facilitation service for the Permit application for students and teachers in need."

The one-off special arrangement is applicable to Secondary 5 students and accompanying teachers who will depart for the CS Mainland study tours in April or May. Taking into account that most students require parents' company to apply for the Permit and the considerable advance preparation such as ticketing arrangements required for the Mainland study tours, CTS will open a designated centre from February 26 (Sunday) for four consecutive Sundays (i.e. February 26 and March 5, 12 and 19) to handle Permit renewals or applications from students and teachers who need such service.

Students and teachers concerned are required to make an appointment via CTS's online system in advance and to submit their basic personal information and booking reference number to their school. Upon receipt of the related lists of students and teachers from schools, the EDB will arrange time slots for the Permit applications. It will send a letter to schools today to inform them of the details.

The EDB announced on February 9 the latest arrangements for the CS Mainland study tours for this school year for current Secondary 4 and Secondary 5 students' participation (with priority given to Secondary 5 students), including providing schools with 22 routes to the Guangdong Province from one day to three days starting from April.

"The above facilitation service will help schools organise and lead students to take part in the Mainland study tours smoothly, enabling principals, teachers and students to gain first-hand experience of the situation of our country, and understand its latest development and achievements in various aspects," the spokesman said.

[CS meets Vice Mayor of Tianjin \(with photo\)](#)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, met the Vice Mayor of Tianjin, Mr Zhu Peng, today (February 21). They exchanged views on further strengthening co-operation between Hong Kong and Tianjin.

Mr Chan welcomed Mr Zhu's visit to Hong Kong with his delegation and said that Hong Kong and Tianjin have all along enjoyed close co-operation. With the COVID-19 epidemic so far under control, normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland has fully resumed and society is returning to full normality. Mr Chan said that he keenly looks forward to the deepening of exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and Tianjin on different aspects, including trade and commerce, finance, culture and education, so as to enhance the complementarity and mutual benefits of both cities.

Mr Chan introduced to Mr Zhu the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's new initiatives to proactively draw talent from all over the world, including the Top Talent Pass Scheme that targets high-income people and graduates of the world's top 100 universities. He welcomed talent from Tianjin to come to Hong Kong for pursuing their development. He also mentioned the HKSAR Government's establishment of the Steering Group on Integration into National Development at the end of 2022 to press ahead with initiatives across bureaux with steerage provided from a strategic and macro perspective, as well as to enhance communication with Mainland authorities. Mr Chan said that Hong Kong, while further strengthening co-operation with Tianjin, will fully leverage its unique advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world, and give full play to its dual role in "going global and attracting foreign investment".

Mr Chan pointed out that Hong Kong and Tianjin are cities with both Chinese and Western cultures, as well as rich historical and cultural backgrounds. Both cities can further promote co-operation on such aspects as culture, arts and tourism to enhance people-to-people bonds. He added that the HKSAR Government released the Youth Development Blueprint at the end of 2022, which aims to nurture on all fronts a new generation of young people with an affection for the country and Hong Kong and equipped with a global perspective, an aspiring mindset and positive thinking. He said that he looks

forward to holding more youth exchange activities between Hong Kong and Tianjin, with a view to promoting Hong Kong youth's awareness and understanding of the motherland, strengthening their exchanges with Mainland people, and enhancing their sense of national identity.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 is 101.3 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Public may download local COVID-19 records compatible with EU Digital COVID Certificate mechanism from March 7

The Government announced today (February 21) that, starting from March 7, members of the public can download local vaccination, testing or recovery records compatible with the European Union Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC) mechanism for outbound travel purposes via the [COVID-19 Electronic Vaccination and Testing Record System](#) (eVT) or the "iAM Smart" mobile application. A Government spokesperson reminded members of the public to ascertain the latest immigration requirements of their destinations, including those for vaccination or testing, before departure.

The EU DCC mechanism is recognised and is in common use across 27 EU member states and some 50 participating countries and territories (listed in Annex). Upon completion of technical onboarding, the EU announced today the

inclusion of records issued by Hong Kong in specified formats in the EU DCC mechanism. Vaccination, testing or recovery records issued by Hong Kong in specified formats are recognised by EU member states as well as participating countries and territories of the EU DCC mechanism. Holders can present the records in an electronic format or have the electronic records printed in a paper format for travelling purposes.

Starting from March 7, members of the public who hold valid local vaccination, paid testing or recovery records can download relevant EU DCC mechanism-compatible records via the eVT by inputting their identity document number and other data required by the system. They can also download the relevant records after identity confirmation through the "iAM Smart" mobile application. Details of the downloading procedures will be available on the eVT website.

[Transport Department to set up 34 consultation counters to assist vehicle owners in applying for HKeToll services](#)

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (February 21) that starting from Friday (February 24), a total of 34 consultation counters will be set up in the territory to assist vehicle owners in applying for HKeToll services, including applying for a vehicle tag, opening an HKeToll account, associating a vehicle to the account and setting up a payment means.

The service hours of 25 consultation counters at MTR stations will be from 9am to 9pm daily, while the service hours of the nine consultation counters located in the New Territories at the Home Affairs Department will be from 9am to 7pm from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays). Details of the consultation counters are at the Annex.

Vehicle owners only have to:

1. provide their Hong Kong identity card number;
2. provide their vehicle plate number;
3. provide their e-contact means registered with the TD (email address or Hong Kong mobile phone number). The TD has been issuing letters to some 800,000 vehicle owners in Hong Kong from February 17 to 24, informing them of their e-contact means currently registered with the TD. Vehicle owners may bring this letter to the consultation counters; and
4. select their payment means (Note).

The staff at the consultation counters will assist them in applying for a vehicle tag, opening of an HKeToll account, associating a vehicle to the account and setting up a payment means through the HKeToll website or the mobile application in one go. The consultation counters will also assist vehicle owners in updating their e-contact means currently registered with the TD where necessary.

In addition to the four customer service centres currently provided by the toll service provider, two dedicated service counters at the Rumsey Street and Tsuen Wan Government multi-storey car parks have commenced operation to enable the taxi trade to apply for vehicle tags and driver cards. The TD urges taxi owners and drivers who plan to use the dedicated service counters to make an appointment on the HKeToll website, hketoll.gov.hk, or the mobile application in advance to avoid waiting.

The Tsing Sha Control Area (Eagle's Nest Tunnel, Sha Tin Heights Tunnel and Tai Wai Tunnel) will implement the HKeToll starting from 5am on May 7. As of February 20, more than 480,000 vehicle tags were issued.

Note: Vehicle owners can select the following payment means: (1) credit card; (2) bank account; or (3) designated stored value account (which can be topped up by various payment methods including credit cards, AlipayHK, Autotoll Account, Faster Payment System (FPS), Octopus, PayMe, VGoPAY and WeChat Pay HK.