



[Applicable to the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme, Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students, School Textbook Assistance Scheme, Student Travel Subsidy Scheme, Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges, Diploma of Applied Education Fee Reimbursement / Diploma Yi Jin Fee Reimbursement and Fee Reimbursement (Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses)]

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IMPORTANT NOTES

I. Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Schemes

- “Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” is a family-based application form which facilitates families with child(ren) attending primary and secondary school(s) or kindergarten(s) / child care centre(s) to apply for student financial assistance.
- For families which have successfully applied for financial assistance in 2023/24 (on or before 1 March 2024) for (i) primary and secondary students or (ii) students at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels or (iii) pre-primary students and the child(ren) will be attending Primary 1 (P1) in the 2024/25 school year, the Student Finance Office (SFO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA) will, according to the applicants’ respective options, issue paper-based pre-filled “Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” (paper-based “pre-filled form”) for 2024/25 or an Access Code for getting the pre-filled “Electronic Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” (electronic “pre-filled form”) for 2024/25 online and other relevant information to them by batches starting from around mid March 2024 in order to facilitate their application for student financial assistance (one application form for each family, but NOT including those only with Secondary 6 students who have graduated in 2023/24).
- If families were granted financial assistance for pre-primary students only (not including students who will be attending P1 in the 2024/25 school year) in 2023/24 (on or before 1 May 2024), the applicants will, according to the applicants’ respective options, be provided with the paper-based pre-filled forms or Access Codes for getting the electronic pre-filled forms online and other relevant information in May 2024 in order to facilitate their application for student financial assistance.
- Please note that if families wish to apply for student financial assistance in 2024/25, please verify the data in the pre-filled form, complete other parts of the form and return the completed application form together with relevant supporting documents to the SFO direct by post or through online submission. Please note that applicants are NOT required to submit the form to the attending schools of their children for processing. Please read every paragraph of this Guidance Notes carefully before completing the application form.
- Applicants only have to submit one paper-based pre-filled form or electronic pre-filled form. Do not submit more than one application form (unless advised by the SFO). Multiple applications from the same applicant will be voided and lead to delay in processing the application. If applicants wish to amend any information in their application submitted or to provide supplementary information, they should notify the SFO in writing. The notification should be duly signed by the applicants and submitted together with relevant supporting documents.

II. Applicable to Applicants of Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Students

- Applicants should return the completed pre-filled form together with all necessary supporting documents to the SFO direct by post or through online submission as soon as possible and preferably on or before 31 May 2024 as application processing takes time. If applicants submitting applications on or before 31 May 2024 have provided all necessary information with supporting documents, met the eligibility criteria and passed the means test, the SFO will release the provisional School Textbook Assistance to eligible student-applicants and Subsidy for Internet Access Charges to eligible families by autopay in July / August 2024. The SFO will also issue notification of result to applicants from August 2024. As and when the textbook grant rates for the 2024/25 school year are available, the SFO will release the remaining subsidy amount to the applicants or recover the overpayment from the applicants accordingly (in around end October / November 2024).
- If applicants have NOT received School Textbook Assistance in 2023/24 (e.g. those with child(ren) attending private schools, Diploma of Applied Education / Diploma Yi Jin (known as Yi Jin Diploma before 2016) programmes, Vocational Training Council, etc.) or applicants have child(ren) who will be promoted to Primary 1 in 2024/25, the SFO will issue the student-based Eligibility Certificates (ECs) to eligible families from around August 2024 onwards. Applicants should return the completed ECs to the schools in which the children are attending within one week after the commencement date of the schools or within two weeks from the issue date of the ECs (whichever is the later) for processing. After receiving the ECs verified by schools, the SFO will release subsidies to eligible applicants from around end October / November 2024 onwards.

III. Applicable to Applicants of Financial Assistance for Pre-primary Students

- If families only apply for financial assistance for pre-primary students in the 2024/25 school year, the applicants should return the completed pre-filled form together with all necessary supporting documents to the SFO direct by post or through online submission as soon as possible and preferably on or before 30 June 2024. If applicants submitting applications by 30 June 2024 have provided all necessary information with supporting documents, met the eligibility criteria and passed the means test, the SFO will issue the notification of result as well as the student-based School Certificates (SCs) to applicants from around August 2024. If student-applicants belong to the following categories: who are going to transfer to another school, whose class and session are different from the pre-filled ones or who are applying for financial assistance for pre-primary students for the first time in the 2024/25 school year, families must submit the SC to the attending school for 2024/25 by 31 August 2024 or within two weeks from the issue date of SCs (whichever is the later) for processing. The SFO will arrange disbursement of fee remission through the schools concerned and disburse the Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students (Grant-KG) through autopay by batches starting from end September 2024.

General Information

1. Eligibility Criteria

1.1 Student-applicant

1.1.1 The student-applicants must be unmarried Hong Kong Residents, with right of abode, right to land or valid permission to remain without any condition of stay (other than the limit of stay) in Hong Kong. Students holding visitor visas, two-way exit permits, student visas only or who are dependents of student-visa / visitor-visa holders are not eligible to apply for student financial assistance;

1.1.2 The schools the student-applicants are attending must belong to the category as stipulated in the schemes in paragraph 2.1 below;

1.1.3 For student-applicants who are attending Nursery, Lower and Upper classes in Kindergarten (K1 to K3) or Child Care Centre (group aged 0-2) / Child Care Centre (group aged 2-3) in the 2024/25 school year, they must be –

(1) Nursery, Lower and Upper classes in Kindergarten (K1 to K3)

(i) at least 2 years and 8 months old as at 31 August 2024 (i.e. born on or before 31 December 2021). (Parents of those who were born on or after 1 January 2022 should submit applications in the 2025/26 school year); and

(ii) attending Nursery (K1), Lower (K2) and Upper (K3) classes in kindergartens registered with the Education Bureau (EDB). The kindergarten should be a non-profit-making kindergarten, offering local curriculum under the kindergarten education scheme. Parents may refer to www.edb.gov.hk for information on the list of kindergartens under the kindergarten education scheme in the 2024/25 school year. If the kindergarten does not intend to stay in the kindergarten education scheme in the 2024/25 school year, those students who have admitted before the 2024/25 school year and remaining in the eligible classes in that kindergarten (referring to eligible lower kindergarten (K2) and upper kindergarten (K3) classes in the 2024/25 school year and eligible K3 classes in the 2025/26 school year) will still be eligible for applying financial assistance for pre-primary students until the end of operation of all eligible classes or they leave the kindergarten (whichever is the earlier).

or

(2) Child Care Centre (group aged 0-2) / Child Care Centre (group aged 2-3)

receiving whole-day care services in child care centres (day crèches, day nurseries or relevant age groups in kindergarten-cum-child care centres) registered with Social Welfare Department (SWD) and pass the “social needs” test within the same assessment period.

1.2 Applicant

1.2.1 Applicants must be the parent or the guardian (as recognized under Guardianship of Minors Ordinance, Cap 13) of the student-applicants. Otherwise, applicants must explain in detail with proof why this cannot be complied with in Section 1 under Part VII of the application form. Provided that the reason given is acceptable, the SFO will continue to process the application;

1.3 Generally speaking, if families currently in receipt of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) have children studying in primary and secondary schools or kindergartens and other class levels below, they should apply direct to SWD for school-related assistance for school fees, examination fees, expenses on textbook and stationery, transport fares, Internet access charges at home, etc. for the 2024/25 school year. They do not need to submit “Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” to the SFO.

2. Financial Assistance Schemes

2.1

Financial Assistance Scheme	Details of the scheme
Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission (KCFR) Scheme	provides needy families with financial assistance in the form of fee remission for their children attending Nursery, Lower and Upper classes in local non-profit-making kindergartens under the kindergarten education scheme and / or receiving whole-day child care services in child care centres.
Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students (Grant-KG)	provides an additional grant to needy kindergarten students who can pass the means test and meet the same eligibility criteria under KCFR Scheme to defray school-related expenses incurred from the students' kindergarten education under the kindergarten education scheme.
School Textbook Assistance (TA) Scheme	provides assistance to needy Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students in government, aided, per caput grant schools and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme for covering the costs of essential textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses.
Student Travel Subsidy (STS) Scheme	provides travel subsidy to needy students attending primary or secondary school or a full-time day course up to first degree level in a recognised institution; residing more than 10 minutes' walking distance away from their schools; and who need to travel to school by public transport.
Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges (SIA)	provides subsidy to needy families whose children are full-time students receiving education at primary or secondary level, or full-time students pursuing Diploma of Applied Education (DAE) programmes or equivalent courses of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) to meet the Internet access charges for e-learning at home for their children (for example, the charges on broadband Internet service or SIM cards provided by operators of fixed or mobile telecommunications services). The subsidy is granted on a household basis. Eligible families will receive a flat-rate cash grant, regardless of the number of children in the family.
Diploma of Applied Education Fee Reimbursement (DAEFR) / Diploma Yi Jin Fee	provides “FULL” or “HALF” tuition fee reimbursement to eligible students who are full-time or part-time students pursuing DAE / Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ). These students may apply for DAEFR / DYJFR for each satisfactorily completed subject, provided that they attained an overall pass in the subject and achieved 80% attendance or above for the subject as confirmed by the institutions. Students who are not assessed as eligible for “FULL” or

Reimbursement (DYJFR)	"HALF" level of assistance will receive reimbursement of 30% of the tuition fee paid for each satisfactorily completed subject, provided that they attained an overall pass in the subject and achieved 80% attendance or above for the subject as confirmed by the institutions.
Fee Reimbursement (Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses) [FR(FAEAECC)]	provides "FULL" or "HALF" tuition fee reimbursement to eligible students who have enrolled on designated evening adult education courses. Students must be aged 17 or above and attending evening secondary courses that are quality-assured and commissioned by the Education Bureau in designated centres. Students who have obtained tuition fee reimbursement under the DAE / DYJ, previously known as the Yi Jin Diploma ("YJD") or Project Yi Jin ("PYJ") before 2012/13 programme will not be eligible for tuition fee reimbursement under this scheme unless they have refunded the HKSAR Government all the reimbursement obtained under the DAE / DYJ / YJD or PYJ programme. In addition, students cannot receive financial assistance for repeating the same level of study under FAEAECC, unless they switch from other curriculums to the New Senior Secondary curriculum. Students who meet the criteria mentioned above, having passed the means test and attained the specified attendance or other relevant requirements will be eligible for "FULL" or "HALF" tuition fee reimbursement. Students who are not assessed as eligible for "FULL" or "HALF" level of assistance but fulfil the prescribed criteria after the end of each school term will receive reimbursement of 30% of the tuition fee paid.

- 2.2 **Other Financial Assistance** – Families of student-applicants passing the means test, apart from eligible for applying for subsidies listed in the table at paragraph 2.1 above in accordance with the conditions of individual schemes, are also eligible to apply for the Examination Fee Remission (EFR) Scheme to the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) through the attending schools. The EFR Scheme is to provide assistance to needy students attending public examinations administered by the HKEAA. Please refer to the Circular on Applications for Examination Fee Remission issued by the HKEAA for details of application and eligibility criteria.

3. The Means Test and Levels of Assistance

- 3.1 The SFO will use the "Adjusted Family Income" (AFI) mechanism as the means test to assess the eligibility of a family for student financial assistance and its assistance level.
- 3.2 The AFI mechanism is based on the following formula:

$$\text{AFI} = \frac{\text{Gross annual income of the family}}{\text{Number of family members} + (1)}$$

- (i) Gross annual income of the family includes the annual income of applicant and his / her spouse; 30% of the annual income of unmarried child / children residing with the family if applicable; and the contribution from relatives / friends if applicable.
- (ii) The members of a family normally refer to the applicant, his / her spouse, unmarried child / children residing with the family and the dependent parent(s) who are supported by the applicant and / or his / her spouse (Please refer to Paragraph 2.3 of "Notes on How to Complete and Return Household Application Form" (SFO 107B(2)) (referred below as "Notes on How to Complete the Form") for definition of "Dependent Parent").
- (iii) For single-parent families of 2 to 3 members, the "plus 1 factor" in the divisor of AFI formula will be increased to 2.
- 3.3 The AFI eligibility benchmarks for various levels of assistance in the 2024/25 school year are being reviewed and will be announced on the website of the WFSFAA (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk) later this year. For reference, the AFI eligibility benchmarks for various levels of assistance in the 2023/24 school year are listed in the tables below. Please note that the AFI is not the average monthly income of a family.

3.3.1 Applicable to Financial Assistance Schemes for Primary and Secondary Students

2023/24 school year - AFI Groups (HK\$) (for reference only)	Level of Assistance
0 –43,495	Full*
43,496 –84,105	Half
> 84,105	Ineligible (applications not successful)

3.3.2 Applicable to Financial Assistance Schemes for Pre-primary Students

2023/24 school year - AFI Groups (HK\$) (for reference only)	Level of Assistance
0 –43,495	Full (100%)*
43,496 –53,280	3/4 (75%)
53,281 –84,105	Half (50%)
> 84,105	Ineligible (applications not successful)

* AFI thresholds for full level of assistance for 3-member and 4-member families are \$52,657 and \$48,445 respectively in the 2023/24 school year. For 2-member single-parent families and 3-member single-parent families, they are regarded as 3-member families and 4-member families respectively for determining the AFI thresholds for full level of assistance and calculation of AFI.

3.4 Computation method of fee remission for KCFR Scheme:

- (i) Nursery, Lower and Upper classes in Kindergarten (K1 to K3) joining the kindergarten education scheme:

$$\text{Half-day class monthly fee remission} = \frac{[\text{Annual net fee* or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance}]{\text{No. of operating months of the kindergarten}}}$$

$$\text{Whole-day class monthly fee remission} = \frac{[\text{Annual net fee* or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance}]{\text{No. of operating months of the kindergarten}}}{\text{(Tuition Fee Subsidy)}} + \frac{[\text{Actual monthly meal charge or maximum meal allowance (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance}]}{\text{(Meal Allowance)}}$$

* refer to the annual school fee after deducting all the government subsidies under the kindergarten education scheme

- (ii) Child Care Centre (group aged 0-2) / Child Care Centre (group aged 2-3):

$$\text{Monthly fee remission} = \frac{\text{Monthly fee inclusive of meal charge or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance}}{\text{level of assistance}}$$

- (iii) Fee Remission Ceilings:

The fee remission ceilings for various levels of KCFR Scheme and the maximum meal allowance (for whole-day kindergarten classes) will be available soon after the commencement of the 2024/25 school year on the WFSFAA's website (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk).

- 3.5 "Social needs" test (for application with children aged between 0 and 3 attending whole-day child care centre or kindergarten-cum-child care centre)

Applicants with children receiving whole-day child care services (i.e. groups aged 0 to 2 and 2 to 3) must pass the AFI means test and the "social needs" test within the same assessment period in order to qualify themselves for the fee remission. Therefore, applicants should complete the "Social Needs" Assessment Form for Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission (SFO 235A) in addition to the application form and submit the completed forms and the supporting documents. Those receiving half-day child care services are not eligible to apply for KCFR Scheme.

- 3.6 In case any student-applicant who has applied for / is receiving fee remission later transfers to another school during the school year, the applicant should obtain Form C (Application Renewal Form for student-applicant who has changed school / resumed class within the 2024/25 school year) from the kindergarten / child care centre newly attended and return the completed form to the SFO through the new school soonest possible. The effective month of fee remission will be the month in which Form C is received by the kindergarten / child care centre, or the month in which the student-applicant is admitted to the school, whichever is the later. If the student-applicant has received fee remission for a particular month from the previous kindergarten / child care centre, he / she will not be granted fee remission for the same month from the new kindergarten / child care centre.

- 3.7 KCFR Scheme aims to provide financial assistance to students only for the period that they are studying in kindergartens / children receiving whole-day child care services in child care centres. Hence, to qualify for the month's fee remission, the student-applicant must have paid the tuition fee and has attended the kindergarten / child care centre in that month. If a student-applicant has been absent from kindergarten / child care centre for an entire month, under normal circumstances, the SFO will cease payment for his / her fee remission for the month(s) of non-attendance.

4. Application Procedure and Timetable

- 4.1 After receiving the Household Application Form from the applicant, the SFO will assess whether the applicant's family is eligible for financial assistance based on the information provided in the application form and assess the eligibility of the student-applicants on the basis of the eligibility criteria of individual schemes. Applicants should submit fresh application for their children for every school year and fill in the form the particulars of all unmarried children residing with them.

- 4.1.1 The SFO will, according to applicants' respective options, issue the paper-based pre-filled form or an Access Code for getting the electronic pre-filled form online and other relevant information to the following applicants by batches starting from around mid March 2024. The applicants concerned may refer to the timeline and procedures listed in the table below –

- applicants who successfully applied for financial assistance for primary and secondary students in 2023/24; or
- applicants who successfully applied for financial assistance for students at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels in 2023/24; or
- applicants who successfully applied for financial assistance for pre-primary students in 2023/24 and the child(ren) will be attending P1 in 2024/25

Approximate Time	Procedures
Starting from mid March 2024	Applicants will be provided with an Access Code for getting the electronic pre-filled form online and other relevant information or the following paper-based documents by batches: (1) Paper-based Pre-filled Form, Guidance Notes and Notes on How to Complete the Form; (2) Supplementary form (applicable to applicants of Student Travel Subsidy); and (3) Addressed envelope for submission of application (only applicable to applicants who are provided with paper-based pre-filled form). (Note: The above applicants who have been disbursed with Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission in the 2023/24 school year for their children aged between 0 and 2 and the children concerned will receive whole-day child care services in the 2024/25 school year are also required to complete "Social Needs" Assessment Form.)
In or before end May 2024	Applicants provided with paper-based pre-filled form are required to submit the completed pre-filled form together with the supplementary form (if applicable) and copies of the relevant supporting documents to the SFO by post, using the addressed envelope provided. Applicants provided with an Access Code and other relevant information are required to get and complete the electronic pre-filled form, and upload copies of the relevant supporting documents for online submission. The SFO will contact the applicants for supplementary information during the processing period, if necessary.
<u>For applicants who have been disbursed with School Textbook Assistance in 2023/24</u>	
July / August 2024	If applicants submitting applications on or before 31 May 2024 have provided all necessary information with supporting documents, met the eligibility criteria and passed the means test, the SFO will release the provisional School Textbook Assistance to eligible student-applicants and Subsidy for Internet Access Charges to eligible families <u>by autopay</u> in around July / August 2024. Applicants submitting application online will receive the provisional School Textbook Assistance and the Subsidy for Internet Access Charges earlier than those applicants using paper-based forms. The SFO will also issue notification of result # to applicants from August 2024. "Notification of Ineligibility" will be issued to those families which cannot pass the means test; have failed to provide the required supplementary information by the deadline set by the SFO; or have withdrawn their applications.
Starting from end October / November 2024	For those students who have been disbursed with the provisional School Textbook Assistance, the SFO will re-calculate and determine the amount of subsidies that the applicants are eligible for and release the remaining subsidy amount to the applicant or recover the overpayment from the applicant, as and when the textbook grant rates for the 2024/25 school year are available and the school information of the student-applicant has been verified with the database of EDB (in around end October / November 2024).
<u>For applicants who have NOT been disbursed with School Textbook Assistance in 2023/24 or who have children attending P1 in 2024/25</u>	
August 2024	Applicants who have passed the means test and met the eligibility criteria will be issued with the notification of result #, the EC and "Guidance Notes on Application for Financial Assistance Schemes" starting from August. "Notification of Ineligibility" will be issued to those families which cannot pass the means test; have failed to provide the required supplementary information by the deadline set by the SFO; or have withdrawn their applications.
September 2024	Applicants receiving ECs must verify carefully the personal information and selected Scheme(s) pre-filled on the ECs. Applicants should return the completed ECs to the school in which the children are attending <u>within one week after the commencement date of the school or within two weeks from the issue date of ECs (whichever is the later) for processing</u> . Schools will certify the student-applicants' status and attendance and then forward the ECs to the SFO. In general, the SFO will not accept any ECs submitted after the deadline.
End October / November 2024 or beyond	After verifying the returned ECs, the SFO will release financial assistance <u>by autopay</u> to those students who are confirmed to be eligible for the respective Schemes they applied. The SFO will send SMS to inform eligible applicants of the related payment information, if the applicants have provided their local and valid mobile phone numbers in the application form.

For applicants who have children applying for financial assistance for pre-primary students in 2024/25 simultaneously, the SFO will issue the "Notification of Result" together with SC to the eligible families. For details, please refer to paragraph 4.1.2.

- 4.1.2 If applicants were granted financial assistance for pre-primary students **only** (not including students who will be attending P1 in the 2024/25 school year) in the 2023/24 school year, the SFO will, according to their respective options, issue the paper-based pre-filled form or an Access Code for getting the electronic pre-filled form online and other relevant information to them in May 2024. The applicants concerned should note the timeline and procedures listed in the table below –

Approximate Time	Procedures
May 2024	Applicants will be provided with the following paper-based documents or an Access Code for getting the electronic pre-filled form online and other relevant information: (1) Paper-based Pre-filled Form, Guidance Notes and Notes on How to Complete the Form; and (2) Addressed envelope for submission of application (only applicable to applicants who are provided with paper-based pre-filled form). (Note: The above applicants who have been disbursed with Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission in the 2023/24 school year for their children aged between 0 and 2 and the children concerned will receive whole-day child care services in the 2024/25 school year are also required to complete "Social Needs" Assessment Form.)

In or before end June 2024	Applicants provided with paper-based pre-filled form are required to submit the completed pre-filled form together with the supplementary form (if applicable) and copies of the relevant supporting documents to the SFO by post, using the addressed envelope provided. Applicants provided with an Access Code and other relevant information are required to get and complete the electronic pre-filled form, and upload copies of the relevant supporting documents for online submission. The SFO will contact the applicants for supplementary information during the processing period, if necessary.
August 2024 or beyond	If applicants submitting applications have provided all necessary information and supporting documents, the SFO will issue the following notifications to applicants after completing the eligibility assessment: (1) "Notification of Result" together with SC - for each eligible applicant who has passed the means test and met the eligibility criteria in around August 2024. If student-applicants belong to the following categories: who are going to transfer to another school, whose class and session are different from the pre-filled ones or who are applying for financial assistance for pre-primary students for the first time in the 2024/25 school year, applicants must submit the SC to the attending school for 2024/25 by 31 August 2024 or within two weeks from the issue date of SCs (whichever is the later) for processing. Upon receipt of the SCs for the student-applicants concerned from the school, the SFO will arrange disbursement of subsidies after verifying the eligibility of the student-applicants; or (2) "Notification of Ineligibility" - for families which cannot pass the means test; have failed to provide the required supplementary information by the deadline set by the SFO; have withdrawn their applications; or cannot meet the eligibility criteria.

- 4.2 When returning the application form, applicants must provide copy of all supporting documents. Insufficient information / documents will delay the application processing or even result in disqualification of the application. If applicants have submitted the pre-filled forms online, they need not submit the paper-based application form to the SFO separately and vice versa.
- 4.3 If applicants wish to amend any information in their applications submitted or to provide supplementary information (e.g. updating the family members' information, claiming additional unmarried child residing with the family), they should notify the SFO in writing no later than 30 calendar days from the date of occurrence of changes. The notification should be duly signed by the applicants with the application number or HKID card number of the applicants provided and submitted together with the relevant supporting documents to the SFO. If there are substantial changes in the applicant's family particulars (e.g. family composition, financial position, etc.) after the assessment period (from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024), the applicant may inform us in writing together with relevant supporting documents. The SFO will consider each case on its individual merits.
- 4.4 If families currently in receipt of CSSA have children not being covered by the CSSA or are applying for the DAEFR / DYJFR and / or FR(FAEAE), such applicants may submit applications to the SFO. The SFO may request the applicants to provide a copy of the Annex of "Notification of Successful Application" or Annex of "Notification of Revision of Assistance" issued by the SWD for proving that the student-applicants are not CSSA recipients, if necessary. Families with members in receipt of Old Age Living Allowance, Old Age Allowance or Disability Allowance can still submit the "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" to the SFO for financial assistance.
- 4.5 All applications of financial assistance for primary and secondary students submitted on or after 1 June 2024 will be handled by the SFO after the applications received before end May are processed. Notification of result and release of financial assistance to these applicants will therefore be deferred.
- 4.6 **Under normal circumstances (except financial assistance for pre-primary students), the SFO will not accept any "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" submitted on or after 1 March 2025. The SFO may give special consideration to cases with exceptional circumstances. The application deadlines for individual financial assistance schemes are listed in the following table –**

Financial Assistance Scheme	Application Deadline
Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission (KCFR) Scheme	Applicants should forward their "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" to the SFO before the completion of attending classes in the 2024/25 school year or not later than 15 August 2025, whichever is the earlier. Otherwise, fee remission will generally not be released even if they can pass the means test and meet the eligibility criteria. The effective month of fee remission will be the month in which the application forms are submitted by the applicants, or the month in which the student-applicants are admitted to the kindergartens / child care centres, whichever is the later.
Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students (Grant-KG)	Applicants should submit their "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" to the SFO before the completion of attending classes in the 2024/25 school year or not later than 15 August 2025 whichever is the earlier. Otherwise, the Grant-KG will generally not be disbursed even if they can pass the means test and meet the eligibility criteria.
School Textbook Assistance (TA) Scheme	Applicants should submit their "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" to the SFO on or before 31 October 2024. Otherwise, School Textbook Assistance will generally not be released even if they can pass the means test and meet the eligibility criteria.
Student Travel Subsidy (STS) Scheme	For applicants who submit their "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" on or after 1 November 2024, pass the means test and meet the eligibility criteria, payment of Student Travel Subsidy (if applicable) to the successful student-applicants may be effected from the date of receipt of application or the date of admission of the student-applicants to school (or the date of cessation of CSSA for students previously in receipt of CSSA), depending on the circumstances of individual cases.
Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges (SIA)	For applicants who submit their "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" at a date on or after 1 February 2025 (i.e. in the latter half of the 2024/25 school year), partial payment of SIA may be made to the successful applicants provided that the applicants can pass the means test and meet the eligibility criteria.

Fee Reimbursement for Diploma of Applied Education (DAEFR) / Diploma Yi Jin (DYJFR)	If applicants need to apply for "FULL" or "HALF" Fee Reimbursement on or after 1 March 2025 for their children attending DAE / part-time DYJ courses that commence during the period from 1 March 2025 to 31 May 2025, they should approach relevant institutions for details of the application procedures and the deadlines. They should also submit the relevant application documents to the institutions for onward submission to the SFO for processing.
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- 4.7 The SFO will acknowledge receipt of applications by means of SMS through applicants' Hong Kong mobile phone numbers or in writing (applicable to applicants who are unable to provide Hong Kong mobile phone number). If the Hong Kong mobile phone number or correspondence address provided by the applicants is incorrect, the SFO will not be able to issue acknowledgement to these applicants. Therefore, applicants are required to fill in the relevant information accurately. If applicants do not receive any acknowledgement of receipt of applications by means of SMS or in writing from the SFO within 20 working days after submitting their application form, please call the SFO enquiry hotline (Tel: 2802 2345) to check whether the application has been received by the SFO to avoid delay in application due to wrong / unsuccessful delivery.

5. Provision / Handling of Personal Data

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of applicants to complete the application form fully and truthfully and to provide all supporting documents. The WFSFAA will assess the eligibility for and the level of assistance to be granted based on the information provided by the applicants. Insufficient information / misrepresentation of facts / providing false and misleading information will render the application processing deferred, application disqualified for further processing or will even lead to criminal prosecution.
- 5.2 The personal data provided in this application and any supplementary information provided on the request of the WFSFAA will be used by the WFSFAA and the EDB / disclosed to the agents of the WFSFAA / EDB, the schools / institutions concerned and relevant government bureaux / departments for the following purposes:
- Activities relating to the processing and counter-checking of application under schemes listed below and notification of application result -
 - Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students (Grant-KG)
 - Kindergarten & Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS)
 - School Textbook Assistance Scheme (STAS)
 - Examination Fee Remission Scheme (EFRS)
 - Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STSS)
 - Subsidy for Internet Access Charges (SIA)
 - Diploma of Applied Education Fee Reimbursement (DAEFR) / Diploma Yi Jin Fee Reimbursement (DYJFR)
 - Fee Reimbursement (Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses) [FR(FAEAEC)]
 - Tertiary Student Finance Scheme – Publicly-funded Programmes (TSFS)
 - Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Full-time Tertiary Students (NLSFT)
 - Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students (FASP)
 - Non-means-tested Loan Scheme for Post-secondary Students (NLSPS)
 - Extended Non-means-tested Loan Scheme (ENLS)
 - Continuing Education Fund (CEF)
 - Working Family Allowance (WFA) Scheme

The applicant consents that the WFSFAA may inform schools / institutions of the result of the application, including assistance level, subsidy amount and date of payment of assistance;
 - Activities relating to authentication of application under schemes listed in (i) above against other database of the WFSFAA and the database of other relevant government bureaux / departments and schools / institutions in association with the financial assistance received by the applicant / applicant's family members to prevent double subsidies, detect fraudulence, recover overpayment(s) / overdue repayment(s) or any outstanding amount / any cost arising therefrom, and other related matters;
 - Activities relating to the matching of the personal data of the student-applicant (where applicable) with the database of EDB in association with processing and counter-checking of the application for financial assistance schemes listed in (i) above and the granting of other financial assistance by the WFSFAA, so as to verify / update student records of the WFSFAA and confirm eligibility for individual scheme;
 - Activities relating to the matching of the personal data of the applicant and applicant's family members with other database of the WFSFAA and the database of the SWD in association with processing and counter-checking of the application under schemes listed in (i) above and the granting of other financial assistance by the WFSFAA to prevent double subsidies (in case the applicant's family was in receipt of CSSA during the relevant assessment period or is currently in receipt of CSSA) and recover overpayment(s);
 - Activities relating to the matching of the personal data of the applicant and applicant's family members with other database of the WFSFAA and the database of the Immigration Department in association with processing and counter-checking of the application listed in (i) above and the granting of other financial assistance by the WFSFAA, so as to verify / update the records of applicant and applicant's family members and confirm their eligibility for individual scheme;
 - administration and maintenance of loan account(s) and repayment of loans;
 - Statistics and research purposes; and
 - Processing and counter-checking of applications / selection of needy students for award of other financial assistance administered by the WFSFAA, the EDB, the HKEAA, relevant government departments / organizations and the schools / institutions concerned.
- 5.3 The personal data of the applicant and those of his / her family members provided by the applicant may be disclosed to government bureaux / departments / organizations and the schools / institutions concerned for the purposes stated in paragraph 5.2 above; or where the applicant has given consent to such disclosure; or where such disclosure is authorized or required by law. The provision of personal data to the WFSFAA by the applicant is voluntary, but if the applicant fails to provide the personal data required, we may not be able to process his/her application.
- 5.4 If necessary, the WFSFAA will contact the schools / institutions concerned, other government departments and organizations, including the employers of the applicant and his / her family members, to authenticate the information provided in the application. Any misrepresentation and concealment of facts will lead to disqualification, restitution in full of the assistance granted and possible prosecution.

- 5.5 As a measure to verify the truthfulness and completeness of the information provided by the applicants, the WFSFAA will conduct counter-checking on some of the successful applications, through home visit or other means. During home visits or authentications, the WFSFAA staff may seek clarifications of the application data and require additional information. They may also examine the originals of all supporting documents. It is the responsibility of applicants to keep all supporting documents of the application data for at least two years, and they should cooperate with the WFSFAA staff. Intentional obstruction to the WFSFAA staff in their course of verification, concealment of facts or failure to provide the information required will lead to restitution in full of the assistance granted (including the financial assistance granted under all financial assistance scheme(s) administered by the WFSFAA) and possible prosecution.
- 5.6 All documents submitted are not returnable. However, in accordance with Sections 18 and 22 and Principle 6 of Schedule 1 of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Chapter 486 of the Laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), an applicant has the right to obtain access and make corrections to the data provided by him / her. He / she can also obtain copies of his / her personal data subject to the payment of necessary administrative charges. Such request should be addressed to Deputy Departmental Secretary (Administration), WFSFAA.

6. Payment and Adjustment Arrangement

- 6.1 For financial assistance for primary and secondary students, the SFO will disburse the subsidies to eligible applicants by autopay. (Note: The provisional School Textbook Assistance and Subsidy for Internet Access Charges are normally disbursed to eligible applicants starting from around July / August whilst Student Travel Subsidy is normally released from around end October / November onwards.)
- 6.2 For Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission, the approved amount of fee remission will be paid to the kindergartens / child care centres concerned directly by the Treasury in about 10 working days after the issue of notification of result with fee remission amount. Payment to applicants will then be arranged by the kindergartens / child care centres.
- 6.3 The SFO will disburse the Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students through autopay to the bank account of the eligible applicants starting from end September 2024 at the earliest.
- 6.4 If applicants would like to apply for re-assessment due to substantial changes in the applicant's family particulars after the assessment period or other reasons, they may apply in writing to the SFO, specifying in the written request the application number or the HKID card number of the applicants, and providing detailed justifications and any documentary evidence in support of their application. The application for re-assessment must be duly signed by the applicants. Re-assessment normally takes three months to process. Since longer processing time will be needed for re-assessment, applicants should apply as promptly as possible for re-assessment within one month from the issue date of the notification of result or before the school year ends, whichever is the earlier.
- 6.5 The subsidy under STS Scheme is calculated on the basis of the average unit fare relevant to the districts in which the student studies and resides during term-time. Full or half rate of subsidy will be provided based on the level of assistance assessed. It is not in a form of actual reimbursement. As such, the subsidy provided is not equivalent to the actual home-school travelling expenses incurred by the students. If applicants would like to seek a review of the subsidy amount, they could raise such a request in writing within one month from receiving the subsidy. The applicants need to provide detailed justifications, specify the application number or the HKID card number, and duly sign the request for review. The review will normally be completed within three months.
- 6.6 Notwithstanding paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3 above, the WFSFAA may at any time withhold or suspend / ceased the payment of financial assistance or loan to a successful applicant under any of the financial assistance schemes mentioned in paragraph 2 above or other financial assistance scheme(s) and loan scheme(s) administered by the WFSFAA for such period as the WFSFAA considers necessary if:
- (i) any irregularity in any of the applicant's applications under the financial assistance schemes mentioned in paragraph 2 above (including the application for the 2024/25 year or any previous school year) is detected (including but not limited to applications with incomplete information provided or information which is suspected to be false) during the vetting / counter-checking / reviewing processes;
 - (ii) the applicant fails to provide the complete information as required by the WFSFAA during the detailed checking exercise in respect of any previous applications made by the applicant under any of the financial assistance schemes mentioned in paragraph 2 above before the stipulated deadline; and
 - (iii) the WFSFAA has ground to believe that there has been overpayment(s) to an applicant, or that any amount was due to be paid by the applicant to the Government, under or in connection with any of the financial assistance scheme(s) (including but not limited to those mentioned in paragraph 2 above) or loan scheme(s) administered by the WFSFAA, regardless of whether or not the overpayment was made or the amount due was incurred in the same year as the payment of the financial assistance or loan to be suspended under this paragraph 6.6.
- 6.7 Without prejudice to any rights and remedies available to the Government against an applicant and any other persons, if there is any over-payment to the applicants under any of the financial assistance schemes (including but not limited to those schemes mentioned in paragraph 2 above) or loan schemes administered by the WFSFAA, regardless of the cause for such over-payment, the applicant is liable to refund the overpaid amount immediately upon the request of the WFSFAA.
- 6.8 Without prejudice to paragraph 6.7 above, if any overpayment was made to the applicant or any amount was due to be paid by the applicant to the Government under or in connection with any of the financial assistance schemes (including but not limited to those mentioned in paragraph 2 above) or loan schemes administered by the WFSFAA, the WFSFAA may set-off the amount overpaid or the amount due against the financial assistance which the applicant is entitled to under any financial assistance scheme(s) administered by the WFSFAA.

7. Enquiry

- 7.1 For enquiries relating to the financial assistance schemes and application procedures, please call our 24-hour enquiry hotline at 2802 2345. Alternatively, applicants may visit the WFSFAA's website (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk) for more information.

8. Business Hours

Monday to Friday	8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. 2:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. (Offices are closed during lunch hour from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.)
Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays	Closed