



**HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES –
GUIDANCE NOTES**

[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 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.
- If families wish to apply for student financial assistance in 2021/22, please complete the paper-based application form and return the completed application form together with all necessary supporting documents to the Student Finance Office (SFO) direct by post; or complete the “Electronic Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes”, upload all necessary supporting documents and submit them together online, according to this Guidance Notes. The electronic application form and relevant application documents are available at the “SFO E-link - My Applications (Financial Assistance Schemes at Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Levels)” website (<https://ess.wfsfaa.gov.hk/espps>). Please note that applicants are NOT required to submit the application form to the attending schools of their children for processing. Please read every paragraph of this Guidance Notes carefully before completing the application form.
- If applicants have already submitted the paper-based application form for 2021/22 to the SFO, please do not submit the application form again (including electronic 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 application form together with all necessary supporting documents to the SFO direct by post or through online submission preferably on or before 31 May 2021 as application processing takes time. If applicants who submit applications on or before 31 May 2021 have provided all necessary information with supporting documents, met the eligibility criteria and passed the means test, the SFO will issue the student-based Eligibility Certificates (ECs) to eligible families from August 2021 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 October 2021 onwards. “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.

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

- The SFO will distribute the paper-based “Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” together with the student-based School Certificates (SCs) through the schools in around July 2021 for completion by those applicants with children newly attending kindergarten / child care centre in the 2021/22 school year or who have not received financial assistance for pre-primary students in the 2020/21 school year.
- Applicants should return the completed application form to the SFO direct by post or through online submission as soon as possible for processing. Besides, applicants must also submit the SC for the student-applicant to the school concerned by 31 August 2021 and the school will then pass the SC to the SFO. Upon receipt of the SC from the school, the SFO will arrange disbursement of fee remission / subsidy. The SFO will disburse fee remission to the successful applicants 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 2021.

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 (Please provide copy of Hong Kong Identity Card / Birth Certificate or supporting document stated in Paragraph 1.1 of “Notes on How to Complete and Return Household Application Form” (SFO 75B(2)) (referred below as “Notes on How to Complete the Form”). 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 2021/22 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 2021 (i.e. born on or before 31 December 2018). (Parents of those who were born on or after 1 January 2019 should submit applications in the 2022/23 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 2021/22 school year. If the kindergarten does not intend to stay in the kindergarten education scheme in the 2021/22 school year, those students have admitted before the 2021/22 school year and remaining in the eligible classes in that kindergarten (referring to eligible lower kindergarten (K2) and upper kindergarten (K3) classes in the 2021/22 school year and eligible K3 classes in the 2022/23 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). Hence, children of needy families may also apply for financial assistance for pre-primary students.

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 the student-applicant's family must 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 the 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 the 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 2021/22 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 Senior Secondary 3 / 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 receiving formal primary or secondary education or attending a full-time day course up to first degree level in an acceptable institution, residing beyond 10 minutes walking distance from school and traveling 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 Yi Jin (DYJ) (known as Yi Jin Diploma (YJD) before 2016) 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). <u>The subsidy is granted on a household basis.</u> Eligible families will receive a flat-rate cash grant, regardless of the number of children in the family.
Diploma Yi Jin Fee Reimbursement (DYJFR)	provides FULL or HALF tuition fee reimbursement to needy students who are full-time or part-time students pursuing Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ). These students may apply for DYJFR for each satisfactorily completed subject. Students who are not assessed as eligible for FULL or 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(FAEAEC)]	provides FULL or HALF tuition fee reimbursement to needy 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 EDB in designated centres. Students who have obtained tuition fee reimbursement under the DYJ, previously known as the 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 Government all the reimbursement obtained under the DYJ/YJD or PYJ programme. In addition, students cannot receive financial assistance for repeating the same level of study under FAEAEC, 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.
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2.2 **Other Financial Assistance** – Families of student-applicants passing the means test for financial assistance for primary and secondary students, 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 other kinds of financial assistance through the attending schools or relevant organizations including education-related schemes under the Community Care Fund Programme and the Examination Fee Remission (EFR) Scheme etc. The EFR Scheme is to provide assistance to needy students attending public examinations conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (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 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 2021/22 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

2021 / 22 school year - AFI Groups (HK\$)	Level of Assistance
0 – 41,360	Full*
41,361 – 79,976	Half
> 79,976	Ineligible (applications not successful)

3.3.2 Applicable to Financial Assistance Schemes for Pre-primary Students

2021 / 22 school year - AFI Groups (HK\$)	Level of Assistance
0 – 41,360	Full remission (100%)*
41,361 – 50,664	3/4 remission (75%)
50,665 – 79,976	1/2 remission (50%)
> 79,976	Ineligible (applications not successful)

* AFI thresholds for full level of assistance for 3-member and 4-member families are \$50,071 and \$46,066 respectively in the 2021/22 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:

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

(Tuition Fee Subsidy) / (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 2021/22 school year on the SFO's website (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo).

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 2021/22 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. Relevant application procedures and timetable are listed below –

4.1.1 Applicable to applicants of financial assistance for primary and secondary students

Time	Procedures
May 2021	<p>Applicants may obtain the following application documents from District Offices or schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) "Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" [SFO 7B]; (2) "Guidance Notes on Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Schemes" [SFO 75B(1)] and "Notes on How to Complete the Form" [SFO 75B(2)]; (3) "Cover Sheet for Supporting Documents" [SFO 108]; and (4) Addressed envelope for submission of application [SFO 182]. <p>If applicants opt to complete and submit the electronic application form online, they may access "SFO E-link – My Applications (Financial Assistance Schemes at Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Schemes)" website and refer to the relevant application documents.</p> <p>(Note: If applicants wish to apply for Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission in 2021/22 for their children aged between 0 and 2, they should obtain "Social Needs" Assessment Form [SFO 235A] from the concerned kindergarten / child care centre.)</p>

Before end May 2021	Applicants are required to submit the completed application form and copies of the relevant supporting documents to the SFO by post, using the addressed envelope provided. Alternatively, applicants may complete the electronic application form, upload copies of the relevant supporting documents and submit them together online. The SFO will contact the applicants for supplementary information during the processing period, if necessary.
August 2021	If applicants submitting applications on or before 31 May 2021 have provided all necessary information with supporting documents, the SFO will issue the notification of result, the student-based EC and “Guidance Notes on Application for Financial Assistance Schemes” to eligible applicants starting from August 2021*. “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 2021	Applicants receiving ECs must verify carefully the personal information and selected Scheme(s) pre-printed 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.
October 2021 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 valid local mobile phone numbers in the application form.

* For applicants who have children applying for financial assistance for pre-primary students in 2021/22 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 Applicable to applicants of financial assistance for pre-primary students

Time	Procedures
August 2021 or beyond	<p>If applicants have provided all necessary information with supporting documents and submitted the completed SC to the school concerned for processing on or before 31 August 2021, the SFO will issue the following notifications to applicants after completing the eligibility assessment:</p> <p>(1) “Notification of Result” - for eligible applicant who has passed the means test and met the eligibility criteria within two months after the SFO has received the application form.</p> <p>(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; or have withdrawn their applications; or cannot meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>All student-applicants who are attending new kindergartens / child care centres in the 2021/22 school year or have not received fee remission in the 2020/21 school year should submit the SC. Applicants must submit the completed SC to the school concerned before 31 August 2021 for processing. <u>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.</u></p>

- 4.2 Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes and related application documents are available in both Chinese and English. If applicants apply for student financial assistance by using the English version of the application form, all subsequent correspondence / notifications issued by the SFO will be in English or vice versa.
- 4.3 When returning the application form, applicants must provide copy of all supporting documents. In sufficient information / documents will delay the application processing or even result in disqualification of the application. If applicants have submitted the electronic application form online, they need not submit the paper-based application form to the SFO separately.
- 4.4 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 2020 to 31 March 2021), the applicant may inform us in writing together with relevant supporting documents. The SFO will consider each case on its individual merits.
- 4.5 If families currently in receipt of the CSSA have children not being covered by the CSSA or are applying for the DYJFR and / or FR(FAEAEC), such applicants may submit applications to the SFO. The SFO may request the applicant to submit a copy of the “ Notification of Successful Application” or “Notification of Revision of Assistance” issued by SWD for verification on whether the student-applicants are CSSA recipients, if necessary. Families with members in receipt of Old Age Living Allowance, Old Age Allowance or Disability Allowance can still submit “Household Application Form for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” to the SFO for financial assistance.

- 4.6 All applications of financial assistance for primary and secondary students submitted on or after 1 June 2021 will be handled by the SFO after the applications received by end May are processed. Notification of result and release of financial assistance to these applicants will therefore be deferred.
- 4.7 Under normal circumstances (except financial assistance for pre-primary students), the SFO will not accept any “Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Schemes” submitted on or after 1 March 2022. 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 2021/22 school year or not later than 15 August 2022, 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 2021/22 school year or not later than 15 August 2022, 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 2021. 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 2021, 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 2022 (i.e. in the latter half of the 2021/22 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 Yi Jin (DYJFR) / Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses [FR(FAEAEC)]	If applicants need to apply for student financial assistance on or after 1 March 2022 for their children attending courses that commence during the period from 1 March 2022 to 31 May 2022, they should approach relevant institutions for details of the application procedures and deadlines. They should also submit application documents to the institutions, which will forward them to the SFO for processing.

- 4.8 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 SFO 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 the application and any supplementary information provided on the request of the SFO will be used by the SFO and the EDB / disclosed to the agents of the SFO / EDB, the schools / institutions concerned and relevant government bureaux / departments for the following purposes:

- (i) 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 Scheme for Internet Access Charges (SIA)
 - 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)

The applicant consents that the SFO may inform schools / institutions of the result of the application, including assistance level, subsidy amount and date of payment of assistance;

- (ii) Activities relating to authentication of application under schemes listed in (i) above against other database of the SFO and the database of other relevant government bureaux / departments and schools / institutions in association with the student 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;
- (iii) 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 student financial assistance schemes listed in (i) above and the granting of other student financial assistance by the SFO, so as to verify / update student records of the SFO and confirm eligibility for individual scheme;
- (iv) Activities relating to the matching of the personal data of the applicant and applicant's family members with other database of the SFO 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 student financial assistance by the SFO and SWD 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);
- (v) administration and maintenance of loan account(s) and repayment of loans;
- (vi) Statistics and research purposes; and
- (vii) Processing and counter-checking of applications / selection of needy students for award of other student financial assistance administered by the SFO, 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.

5.4 If necessary, the SFO 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 SFO will conduct counter-checking on some of the successful applications, through home visit or other means. During home visits or authentications, the SFO 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 SFO staff. Intentional obstruction to the SFO 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 SFO) 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 Assistant Controller (Administration), SFO.

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 in or after October 2021.
- 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 2021 at the earliest.
- 6.4 If applicants are dissatisfied with the result of their assessment or there are substantial changes in the applicant's family particulars after the assessment period, they may apply in writing to the SFO for re-assessment, 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 STSS 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 SFO may at any time withhold or suspend / cease 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 SFO for such period as the SFO 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 2021/22 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 SFO 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 SFO 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 SFO, 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 SFO, regardless of the cause for such over-payment, the applicant is liable to refund the overpaid amount immediately upon the request of the SFO.
- 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 SFO, the SFO 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 SFO.

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 SFO homepage (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/sfo) for more information.

8. Business Hour

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