

Student Athlete Support Scheme (2019/20 School Year)

SUMMARY:

This circular informs schools of the operational details and funding arrangements of the Student Athlete Support Scheme (the Scheme), and invites HKSSF member schools to apply for grants under the Scheme in the 2019/20 school year.

DETAILS:

Background

The Chief Executive announced in the 2013 Policy Address that the Government would work with the Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation (HKSSF) to provide appropriate support to students from low-income families, so that they can fully develop their sporting potential. The Pilot Scheme was launched in the 2013/14 school year and was regularised from 2016/17 school year onwards.

Aim of the Scheme

The Scheme aims to provide financial support to students from low-income families and with sporting talent to help them pursue their sporting goals through participating in HKSSF inter-school competitions

Target Beneficiaries

Under the Scheme, Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students who are recommended by the school principal as having the ability to represent their school in HKSSF events are eligible to receive funding support provided that –

- (a) they receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA); or
- (b) they receive full or half grant from the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA); or
- (c) their schools assess them as being financially needy.

Areas of Support

1. Each school can apply for a total grant of up to \$13,200 per year to provide support to students in the following four main areas¹ –

¹ For more detailed deliberation of eligible items, please refer to the set of Frequently Asked Questions enclosed.

- (a) purchase of sports equipment (including shoes and clothing);
 - (b) transportation fees for local training (including those under the Schools Sports Programme of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) as stated in para. 5(d) below) and HKSSF competition;
 - (c) school squad coaching fees, *excluding* the costs of hiring private coaches for individual students; and
 - (d) course fees for participating in the Outreach Coaching Programme (school squad training) and Joint School Sports Training Programme of HKSSF sports under the School Sports Programme of the LCSD.
2. Schools may decide on the amount of funding to be allocated to each area of support and the number of students to be supported, but the amount of support for any individual student must not exceed \$3,000 per year.

Important Points to Note

To ensure the effective use of funding under the Scheme and to maximise the benefit to individual students, participating schools should strictly follow the requirements set out below –

- (a) Grants from the Scheme should only be used to support students who will participate in HKSSF events in the 2019/20 school year.
- (b) The subsidy should be used to meet expenses incurred by the students during the 2019/20 school year, i.e. from 1 September 2019 to 31 May 2020.
- (c) Sports equipment purchased using the subsidy should be owned and retained by the student. Schools should keep receipts signed by an appropriate school representative and the student's parent or guardian to show that the equipment is kept by the student.
- (d) The subsidy should only cover school squad training organised by schools, course fees and transportation costs for participating in the Outreach Coaching Programme (school squad training) and Joint School Sports Training Programme of HKSSF sports under the LCSD School Sports Programme. Training conducted by other organisations is not covered by the Scheme.
- (e) The subsidy should only be used to cover the portion of transportation costs or training fees that a student is required to bear. It should not be used to settle the transportation costs or training fees for the whole school squad.

- (f) Students receiving support under the Scheme to participate in a HKSSF event may also receive subsidies from other sources to cover fees payable in relation to training and competitions. However, the total amount of subsidies from different sources shall not exceed the total sum that the student has to pay for his or her participation in the particular sports event. Schools should keep clear records for audit purposes.
- (g) Schools should observe the School Administration Guide, Code of Aid for Aided Incorporated Management Committee Schools and other related circulars of the Education Bureau. Schools may also make reference to ICAC’s Best Practice Checklist on “Governance and Internal Control in Schools”².

Funding and Administrative Arrangements

1. The Scheme is a school-based scheme open to applications from all HKSSF member schools (primary and secondary schools). Funds will be released on a reimbursement basis according to the following schedule and subject to the submission of reports. Schools should submit the report once only:

Submission of Year-end Reports	Reimbursement
On or before 10 January 2020	On or before 29 April 2020
On or before 31 March 2020	On or before 3 July 2020
On or before 31 May 2020	On or before 31 August 2020

2. Interested schools are required to submit to the HKSSF an application form (**Annex I**) before the specified deadline, which provides basic information on the estimated number of eligible students and estimated expenditure per area of support. If both the primary and secondary sections of the same school are individual member schools of the HKSSF and are interested to join the Scheme, they should submit separate applications and the school type should be clearly stated on the application form.
3. The HKSSF will send back an acknowledge receipt of applications (a sample receipt is at **Annex II**) by email, and will upload the list of approved schools onto its website after processing applications. Schools should contact the HKSSF if they do not receive the acknowledgement of receipt within one week of submitting the applications, or if they have other queries in relation to the application.

² The document is available online at http://cpas.icac.hk/UploadImages/InfoFile/cate_43/2016/f8a780b1-ecbe-42c7-b46e-d94c378fd007.pdf.

4. Each participating school are required to submit a brief report in a standard format (The report will be mailed to all participating schools and upload to HKSSF website) summarising the use of the funds before the specified deadline. After the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the HKSSF have reviewed the report and confirmed that the relevant criteria and requirements have been met, the HKSSF will disburse the funding to schools on a reimbursement basis. The subsidy will only be released after the report has been submitted, where requests for partial reimbursement would not be accepted. The HAB and HKSSF will make reference to the information provided by schools in evaluating the effectiveness of the Scheme.
5. Schools should keep all vouchers related to the Scheme as well as documents signed by the school representative and the parents or guardians of the beneficiaries acknowledging the receipt of equipment purchased and public transport expenses under the Scheme (Transport expenses record form will be mailed together with the report to all participating schools and will be uploaded to HKSSF website). The HAB and the HKSSF may request schools to provide documents and records for auditing or other relevant purposes. Random checks may also be conducted to ensure proper use of the funds.
6. The HKSSF will process the requests for reimbursement based on the list of approved schools released at the beginning of the school year (see paragraph 10 above). Requests for reimbursement from schools not on the list will not be processed.

APPLICATION

We are now inviting applications for funds under the Scheme for the 2019/20 school year. Interested schools should complete the attached Application Form and return it to the HKSSF by post or by email **on or before 20 September 2019**. The form is available at the HKSSF website (www.hkssf-hk.org.hk/athletesupport.htm). The HKSSF will inform participating schools of the application result (please refer to the sample at **Annex III**) by late October 2019. Schools should contact the HKSSF if they do not receive the result of the applications from the HKSSF by early November 2019.

ENQUIRIES

A set of Frequently Asked Questions is available at **Annex IV**. For further enquiries, please contact Ms Mellissa KWOK, Sports Administrative Assistant of the HKSSF at 2711 7691 or Ms Choyce CHOI, Executive Officer I (Recreation and Sport)³ of the HAB at 3509 8078.

The Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation
27 August 2019