

Student Athlete Support Scheme (2020/21 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 2020/21 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 for them to fully develop their sporting potential. The Pilot Scheme was launched in 2013/14 school year and was regularised from 2016/17 school year onwards.

Aim of the Scheme

The Scheme aims at providing financial support for students with sporting talent from low-income families to help pursue their sporting goals through participating in HKSSF inter-school competitions.

Target Beneficiaries

Any Primary 1 to Secondary 6 students recommended by the respective school principals to participate in the HKSSF programmes, while meeting one of the following criteria, will be eligible for the funding support:

- (a) the student receives Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA); or
- (b) the student receives full or half grant from the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA); or
- (c) the student is being assessed as financially needy by the respective schools.

Areas of Support

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

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

- (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 part (d) below) and HKSSF competitions;
 - (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 the amount of funding to be allocated to each of the major areas of support and the number of students to be supported, but the amount of support for any individual student should 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 are planning participate in HKSSF events in the 2020/21 school year.
- (b) The subsidy should be used to meet expenses incurred by students during the 2020/21 school year (i.e. from 1 September 2020 to 31 May 2021).
- (c) Sports equipment purchased under the scheme should be owned and retained by the students concerned. Schools should keep the acknowledgement receipts co-signed by the appropriate school representatives and the students' parents or guardians as proofs of the students' retention of the equipment.
- (d) The subsidy should only cover school squad trainings organised by schools, course fees and transportation costs for participating in the Outreach Coaching Programmes (school squad trainings) and Joint School Sports Training Programmes of HKSSF sports under the LCSD School Sports Programme. Trainings conducted by other organisations will not be covered by the Scheme.
- (e) The subsidy should only cover the portion of transportation costs or training fees that the eligible students are required to bear. It should not be used to settle the transportation costs or training fees for the entire school squad.

- (f) Students receiving support under the Scheme to participate in a HKSSF event are allowed to receive subsidies from other sources to cover fees payable in relation to the trainings and competitions. However, the total amount of subsidies received shall not exceed the total sum that the students are required to pay for the participation in the sports activities concerned. Schools should keep clear records of the funding from all sources in which each student receives 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”¹.

Funding and Administrative Arrangements

1. The Scheme is of a school-based nature and is opened for applications from all HKSSF member schools (primary and secondary schools). Funds will be released on a reimbursement basis according to the following schedule, after the submission of reports. Each participating school should only submit the report once for every year:

Submission of Year-end Reports	Reimbursement (Tentative)
On or before 31 March 2021	On or before 5 July 2021
On or before 31 May 2021	On or before 31 August 2021

2. Schools that are interested should submit an application to the HKSSF by duly completing the attached application form before 30 October 2020, and provide basic information on the estimated number of eligible students and estimated expenditure for each area of support. If the primary and secondary sections of the same school are individual member schools of the HKSSF and are both interested in joining the Scheme, they should submit separate applications with the school types clearly stated on the application forms.
3. The HKSSF will acknowledge receipt of the applications by returning email. A list of approved schools will be also be uploaded on the HKSSF’s website after the vetting of applications. Schools are advised to contact the HKSSF if they do not receive the acknowledgement of receipt one week after the applications are submitted, or if there are other questions regarding the application.

¹ 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 is required to submit a brief report in standard format (The report will be uploaded to the HKSSF website) summarising the use of the funds before the deadlines specified in paragraph 1. After the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the HKSSF review the reports and confirm that relevant criteria and requirements are met, the HKSSF will disburse the funds to schools on a reimbursement basis. The subsidy will only be released after the report has been submitted, and 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, and the documents co-signed by the school representatives and the parents/guardians of the beneficiaries acknowledging the receipt of equipment purchased, as well as the public transport expenses incurred (Transport expenses record form 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. Requests for reimbursement from schools not on the list will not be processed.

APPLICATION

We are now inviting applications for the Scheme for the 2020/2021 school year. Interested schools should complete and return the Application Form to the HKSSF by post or email **on or before 30 October 2020**. The form is now available at the HKSSF website (www.hkssf-hk.org.hk/athletesupport.htm). The HKSSF will notify schools of the application results via post and email by mid November 2020. The results will also be uploaded on the HKSSF’s website. Schools are advised to contact the HKSSF if they are not notified of the application results by late November 2020.

ENQUIRIES

A set of Frequently Asked Questions is available at (http://www.hkssf-hk.org.hk/pilot%20scheme/20200924%20annex%20IV_faq_e.pdf). For further enquiries, please contact the HKSSF at 2711 7691 or Miss Winnie YEUNG, Assistant Secretary (Recreation and Sport) 3 of the HAB at 3509 7065.

The Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation
24 September 2020