

**Secondary School Places Allocation System 2021/2023**  
**(For Admission to Secondary 1 in September 2023)**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Discretionary Places**

**(1) Q What are discretionary places (DP)?**

A DP are Secondary 1 (S1) places reserved by secondary schools for admission of students at their own discretion. Government, aided and caput secondary schools may reserve not more than 30%, and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) secondary schools participating in the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System may reserve more than 30% of their S1 places as DP.

**(2) Q What are the procedures of applying for a DP?**

A The DP application period for this cycle is from 3 January (Tuesday) to 17 January 2023 (Tuesday). All secondary schools participating in the SSPA System (participating secondary schools) accept applications within the same period.

Parents of participating Primary 6 (P6) students of the current cycle will receive two copies of Application Form for Secondary One Discretionary Place through their children's primary schools in early December 2022. Students not studying in participating primary schools can obtain the Application Forms from the School Places Allocation Section of the Education Bureau (EDB) (Address: Office 2, 2/F, Manulife Financial Centre, 223 Wai Yip Street, Kwun Tong, Kowloon; Tel: 2832 7740 and 2832 7700) during office hours from 6 December 2022 to 17 January 2023.

Besides, in line with the "Smart Government" strategy, the EDB will implement comprehensive digitalisation of S1 admission by phases starting from 2023. For parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users and bound their account with "iAM Smart+"<sup>1</sup>, apart from the paper Application Form, they may also choose to submit DP applications via the SSPA e-Platform. Further details will be announced in the EDB's website and related documents in due course.

As regards the lists of participating secondary schools, parents may refer to the Handbook for Application for Secondary One Discretionary Places (Handbook) distributed to primary schools in early December 2022. Parents may also visit the EDB's Homepage ([www.edb.gov.hk](http://www.edb.gov.hk)) (Select: Home > Education System and Policy > Primary and Secondary Education > School Places Allocation Systems > Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System) to download the lists or call the EDB's 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System on 2891 0088 (Press 2 (English) > 5 (Fax Services) > 04 (Secondary School Places Allocation System: School Lists)) to obtain the lists by fax.

---

<sup>1</sup> For details of the "iAM Smart+" registration, please visit the "iAM Smart" Homepage ([www.iamsmart.gov.hk](http://www.iamsmart.gov.hk)) (Select: Home > "iAM Smart" Registration > Registration Methods).

**(3) Q How many secondary schools may parents apply for their child at the DP stage? What is the consequence of making DP applications to more than two participating secondary schools?**

A DP application is not subject to restriction on districts. Parents may apply to not more than two participating secondary schools, otherwise chance of their child acquiring a DP will be forfeited. Parents must note that if they apply to more than two participating secondary schools for DP, disregard the applications are submitted in paper form or via the SSPA e-Platform, the chance of their child acquiring a DP will be forfeited.

Of the two Application Forms received by the student/parent, one carries Order of School Preference 1 and the other carries Order of School Preference 2. Order of School Preference 1 stands for a student's first choice and Order of School Preference 2 stands for a student's second choice. Based on the unique application number each Application Form carries, the EDB will ascertain the first and second choices of each student (paper Application Form and application via the SSPA e-Platform bear the same application number for applications with the same order of school preference).

If parents have submitted paper Application Form to secondary school, please do not submit duplicate applications via SSPA e-Platform, and vice versa. If parents have submitted duplicate applications (i.e. submitted applications bearing the same application number to the same secondary school via both paper form and SSPA e-Platform), these applications will be regarded as one application only. Hence, duplicate applications will not increase the chance of being allocated to the school. Please note that parents should not submit applications bearing the same application number to different secondary schools respectively via paper form and SSPA e-Platform. Otherwise, the chance of their child acquiring a DP will be forfeited.

**(4) Q Apart from applying to not more than two participating secondary schools, what do parents need to note when making a DP application for their children?**

A Students who are successful in DP application will not be allocated a school place in Central Allocation (CA). Parents should, therefore, apply to school(s) of their preference. Parents should also note that once submitted, disregard in paper form or via the SSPA e-Platform, the Application Form for Secondary One Discretionary Place cannot be retrieved or cancelled, and no change can be made to the order of school preference. Hence, parents should make very careful consideration before submitting an application so as to make a suitable choice.

(5) **Q What should be taken into consideration when parents choose a school for their children?**

A Parents should consider all aspects of a school, e.g. its educational philosophy, culture, religion, class structure, development and operation, and their children's abilities, inclinations and interests so as to make a suitable school choice.

Schools may decide on their own admission procedures, admission criteria and weightings according to their educational philosophy and characteristics. The admission criteria and weightings adopted by the school must be fair, just, open and educationally sound, and must be made public prior to admission, e.g. by displaying in a prominent place of the school, uploading on the school's homepage, publishing in the Secondary School Profile or informing each applicant in writing. Schools may arrange interviews, but no written test in any forms should be conducted.

Parents may refer to the Secondary School Profiles distributed by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation in early December 2022, or visit the Secondary School Profiles homepage and the school's homepage for the latest developments of the school.

(6) **Q As secondary schools are not allowed to conduct written test in any forms for admission purpose, how can they assess the performance of the applicants?**

A Applications will be evaluated based on the admission criteria and weightings set by the schools, e.g. the academic and non-academic performance of the students. Some schools will also make use of the interviews to understand the applicants' aptitude, interest and potential in order to select suitable students for admission.

(7) **Q When making a DP application, what documents are required to be submitted to the secondary school applied to?**

A The documents to be submitted should include the Application Form for Secondary One Discretionary Place and the documents as required by the school concerned, e.g. students' school report cards, awards or prizes, and certificates or records for extra-curricular activities and community service. Submission of information not immediately available, such as primary schools' recommendation letters as well as scores or positions of students in individual subjects, is not required.

Should parents submit the DP application via the SSPA e-Platform, after choosing the preferred secondary schools according to the order of school preference (Order of School Preference 1 or Order of School Preference 2), they have to upload student's identity documents and/or documents required by the secondary schools for completion of application.

**(8) Q What are the criteria for allocating a DP if a student has applied to two participating secondary schools and is accepted by both of them?**

A Based on the unique application number each Application Form Secondary One Discretionary Place carries, the EDB will ascertain the first and second choices of each student (paper Application Form and application via the SSPA e-Platform bear the same application number for applications with the same order of school preference). The EDB will then match the students' preferences against the schools' Successful/Reserve Lists for Discretionary Places. If a student is successful in both of the schools to which he/she applies, allocation will be based on the student's order of preference. In other words, the student will be allocated to his/her first choice.

If parents have applied to a secondary school which eventually will not offer S1 places under the SSPA System in this allocation cycle, that application will not be processed.

**(9) Q Apart from applying to not more than two participating secondary schools, can students apply to Jockey Club Ti-I College at the same time?**

A Yes. The application period for S1 admission to Jockey Club Ti-I College is from 3 January to 19 January 2023. If students are successful in their application to Jockey Club Ti-I College, they will not be allocated a DP or a place in CA under the SSPA System. If they are unsuccessful in their application, they can still be allocated an S1 place through the SSPA System.

**(10) Q Can students also apply to Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary schools not participating in SSPA (NDSS secondary schools) at the same time?**

A Yes. As there is no limit to the number of NDSS secondary schools that a student may apply to, he/she may be accepted by several NDSS secondary schools. However, provided the parent has surrendered the signed Parent's Undertaking and the original of the Primary 6 Student Record Form to one of the schools making the offer, this will serve as a confirmation of the acceptance of the S1 place offered by the NDSS secondary school and the agreement to give up any other subsidised S1 places (including the S1 places of participating secondary schools and Jockey Club Ti-I College). The school will notify the EDB of the parent's decision by early May 2023. On receiving the Successful Lists of Participating Students from NDSS secondary schools, the EDB will not allocate the students on the list to other secondary schools through the SSPA System.

## **Arrangements for notifying successful DP applicants (notification arrangements)**

**(11) Q What are the arrangements for notifying successful DP applicants (notification arrangements) under the SSPA System?**

A Starting from SSPA 2020, all participating secondary schools (including Jockey Club Ti-I College) will be required to, after processing DP applications, notify parents of all successful applicants of their children's inclusion in the Successful Lists for Discretionary Places by letter and phone on a specified date before CA<sup>2</sup>. Schools are required to keep parents well-informed of the notification arrangements, and collect necessary contact information beforehand. The specified date for this SSPA cycle is 31 March 2023. For parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users, they may also receive notifications for successful DP applicants via the SSPA e-Platform on the same day. These notification arrangements are not applicable to reserve and unsuccessful applicants, nor are the notifications of the allocation results. The parents concerned do not need to reply to the notifications. Parents who have received notifications from participating secondary schools of successful applications do not need to fill out the Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form) at the CA stage which begins in April.

The aforementioned notification arrangements are administrative measures. The existing SSPA mechanism and procedures remain unchanged. All students in this SSPA cycle will receive the SSPA allocation results (including results at the DP and CA stages) on 11 July 2023.

If students are studying in primary schools not participating in the SSPA System and are allocated with a school place at the DP stage, participating secondary schools or Jockey Club Ti-I College will call the parents to inform them of the official DP results and the related arrangements on 11 July 2023 (i.e. the date of announcement of the allocation results). If necessary, parents may also contact the secondary school(s) to which they have applied on 11 July 2023.

**(12) Q If students have submitted DP applications to two participating secondary schools, will they be notified as successful applicants by both schools respectively?**

A For individual students who have submitted DP applications to two participating secondary schools and have been successful in both applications, their parents will receive notifications from two participating secondary schools respectively. The students concerned will be allocated to schools of their first choice according to the existing SSPA mechanism.

---

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the EDB Circular No. 18/2019 for details of the arrangements for notifying successful discretionary places applicants and the sample notification letter.

**(13) Q Under the notification arrangements, will reserve and unsuccessful applicants be notified by participating secondary schools of their application results in advance?**

A Under the notification arrangements, participating secondary schools are required to notify only successful applicants of their inclusion in the schools' Successful Lists for Discretionary Places. Schools are not allowed to notify reserve and unsuccessful applicants of their DP application results to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

**(14) Q When will reserve applicants be notified by participating secondary schools that they are allocated with DP?**

A The notification arrangements are not applicable to reserve and unsuccessful applicants. All students (including reserve applicants) in this SSPA cycle will receive the official allocation results from the EDB on 11 July 2023.

**(15) Q After receiving notifications from participating secondary schools, do the parents concerned have to disclose their order of school preference to the schools concerned and confirm their acceptance of the DP offered?**

A According to the existing SSPA System, parents do not have to disclose their order of school preference to the schools they have applied to. The notifications from participating secondary schools to parents under the notification arrangements are not an official release of allocation results. Hence, parents do not have to disclose their order of school preference to the schools concerned, nor confirm their acceptance of the DP offered after receiving notifications of their children's successful DP applications.

**(16) Q After receiving notifications from participating secondary schools as successful DP applicants, can parents change the order of school preference for their children?**

A According to the existing SSPA mechanism, once submitted, disregard in paper form or via the SSPA e-Platform, the Application Form for Secondary One Discretionary Place cannot be retrieved or cancelled, and no change can be made to the order of school preference. Hence, parents are not allowed to change the order of school preference after receiving notifications of their children's successful DP applications from participating secondary schools.

**(17) Q Can participating secondary schools enquire parents about their children's order of school preference?**

A Under the existing SSPA System, parents who apply for DP for their children do not have to disclose their order of school preference to the schools concerned. The existing SSPA mechanism remains unchanged under the notification arrangements. Hence, participating secondary schools should not enquire parents about the related information.

**(18) Q For parents who have received notifications from participating secondary schools of their children’s successful DP applications, can they surrender the DP and fill out the Choice Form for participation in the CA?**

A Under the existing SSPA mechanism, all students who are allocated with DP will not be allocated other school places at the CA stage. Hence, parents of successful DP applicants are not required to make school choices on the Choice Form. Even if they have made school choices on the Choice Form at the CA stage which begins in April, their children will still be allocated to the secondary schools they have successfully applied to at the DP stage according to the existing mechanism.

**(19) Q Are the notification arrangements the same as an official release of DP results? After receiving notifications from participating secondary schools as successful DP applicants, are parents required to complete registration procedures with the schools concerned at once?**

A The notification arrangements as administrative measures are not the same as the release of the final allocation results. The existing SSPA mechanism and procedures remain unchanged. All students in this SSPA cycle will receive the SSPA allocation results (including results at the DP and CA stages) in July as usual.

As the notifications from participating secondary schools to parents are not an official release of allocation results, parents are not required to complete the registration procedures with the schools concerned at once. Parents will receive the Allocation Slips and Admission Slips after the official release of SSPA results on 11 July 2023. By then, parents are required to complete the registration procedures with the secondary schools allocated within a specified period (i.e. from 13 July to 14 July 2023).

**(20) Q What are participating secondary schools required to note when they notify parents of successful DP applicants by letter and phone on the specified date?**

A When receiving DP applications from parents (especially for parents who are residing/working outside Hong Kong), schools should remind them to update contact information in due course. Parents should also be well informed of the arrangements for notifying successful DP applicants by letter and phone on the specified date. Besides, schools should also make proper arrangements according to their school-based circumstances, including reserving the time required for mailing to ensure that parents of successful applicants will receive written notification of their children’s inclusion in the schools’ Successful Lists for Discretionary Places on the specified date, scheduling the time of making phone calls to the parents concerned, devising arrangements for parents whom cannot be contacted on the specified date, etc.

**(21) Q How should participating secondary schools handle phone enquiries from parents regarding whether or not their children are successful DP applicants of the schools?**

A Considering the difficulties in verifying the caller's identity over the phone, schools are recommended not to disclose the information of individual successful DP applicants when receiving such enquiries, in order not to contravene the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. Schools may inform parents of the ways in which parents of successful DP applicants will be notified, and remind them that parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users may also receive notifications for successful DP applicants via the SSPA e-Platform on the same day. If parents have other enquiries, schools may handle them according to their school-based enquiry mechanism.

**(22) Q Apart from notifying parents of successful DP applicants by letter and phone, can secondary schools use other means to notify them?**

A In addition to notifying parents of successful DP applicants by letter and phone, schools may also notify the parents of successful DP applicants by other means if necessary. Yet, schools are required to comply with the principles and requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance when notifying the parents concerned by other means.

**(23) Q Some students are notified by participating secondary schools as successful DP applicants and also offered an S1 place by an NDSS secondary school. If they decide to decline the offer from the NDSS secondary school, why must they retrieve the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form from the NDSS secondary school concerned? If the documents are not retrieved, will the students be eventually allocated to the participating secondary schools concerned?**

A According to the existing mechanism, on the premise of effective use of public resources, NDSS secondary schools will collect from parents of students who accept the S1 places offered the signed Parent's Undertaking together with the original of the Primary 6 Student Record Form for confirmation of acceptance of offer and surrendering of other subsidised S1 places (including the S1 places of participating secondary schools and Jockey Club Ti-I College) to be allocated through the SSPA System, in order to prevent the students concerned from occupying two subsidised secondary school places at the same time. Under the notification arrangements, if students have been notified by participating secondary schools (including Jockey Club Ti-I College) as successful DP applicants and also offered an S1 place by an NDSS secondary school, they may decide whether to decline the offer from the NDSS secondary school within a specified period of time in April (i.e. within around 5 working days after receiving notifications from schools as successful DP applicants in late March; the last date of notification to NDSS secondary schools for SSPA 2023 is 12 April 2023 under normal circumstances). If parents do not notify the NDSS secondary schools concerned and retrieve the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form within the specified period of time, under the existing mechanism, the students concerned will still be included in the Successful Lists of Participating Students of the NDSS schools to be submitted by early May and thus they will not be allocated with S1 places of participating secondary schools, including those having selected them as successful DP applicants.



**(24) Q Can NDSS secondary schools reject parents' requests for retrieving the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form?**

A The existing arrangement for collecting the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and Primary 6 Student Record Form as confirmation of parents' decision is premised on the principle of optimising the use of public resources and to prevent the students concerned from occupying two subsidised secondary school places at the same time. Under the notification arrangements, if the parents of successful DP applicants decide to decline the offer from the NDSS secondary schools, they may notify the NDSS secondary schools concerned and retrieve the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form within a specified period of time (i.e. within around 5 working days after receiving notifications from schools as successful DP applicants in late March, the last date of notification to NDSS secondary schools for SSPA 2023 is 12 April 2023 under normal circumstances). The NDSS secondary schools have to return the relevant documents upon parents' request. Once the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking are retrieved, it will serve as confirmation that the parents have surrendered the school places in the NDSS secondary schools. As such, parents must prudently consider before making the decision.

**(25) Q If parents of successful DP applicants do not retrieve the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form from NDSS secondary schools within a specified period of time, can they retrieve these documents from the schools concerned afterwards so as to surrender the school places in the NDSS secondary schools?**

A Under the existing arrangements, parents will submit to NDSS secondary schools the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form for confirmation of acceptance of the offers from NDSS secondary schools and surrendering of other S1 places (including the S1 places of participating secondary schools and Jockey Club Ti-I College) to be allocated through the SSPA System. On the other hand, under the notification arrangements, as some students may decline the school places offered by NDSS secondary schools after receiving notifications from participating secondary schools as successful DP applicants, the parents concerned may retrieve the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form from the NDSS secondary schools within a specified period of time in order that the NDSS secondary schools may admit other students in accordance with their waiting lists to fill the vacancies, and submit their Successful Lists of Participating Students to the EDB by early May. In this connection, under normal circumstances, parents of successful DP applicants should not retrieve the originals of the signed Parent's Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form from NDSS secondary schools after the specified period of time.

**(26) Q If parents have retrieved the originals of the signed Parent’s Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form from the NDSS secondary schools to confirm surrendering of the school places offered, can they request the NDSS secondary schools concerned to admit their children again in future?**

A If parents have retrieved the originals of the signed Parent’s Undertaking and the Primary 6 Student Record Form from NDSS secondary schools, it indicates that they have decided to surrender the places offered by the NDSS secondary schools. After the release of SSPA results in July, if parents would like to apply for S1 places in the NDSS secondary schools concerned again, schools can decide whether to admit the students according to their school-based student admission mechanism.

**(27) Q Can participating secondary schools amend the Successful/Reserve Lists for Discretionary Places after submitting to the EDB?**

A Participating secondary schools are required to submit the Successful/Reserve Lists for Discretionary Places to the EDB on or before a specified date (the specified date for SSPA 2023 is 30 March 2023). Schools must check the Lists with extreme care before submission. After submitting the Lists, schools are not allowed to make any changes to them except under special circumstances (e.g. the applicants are not eligible for DP application, the number of successful DP applicants the school has notified is more than the DP quota of the school, etc.). If there are special circumstances, schools should provide a written explanation to the EDB and seek prior approval from the EDB as soon as possible before they notify parents of the affected students.

**(28) Q If students have not been notified by participating secondary schools as successful DP applicants, does it mean that they will not be allocated with a school place at the DP stage?**

A Under the notification arrangements, some students may receive notifications of their successful DP applications from two participating secondary schools and they will eventually be allocated to schools of their first choice according to the existing SSPA mechanism, leaving one school place available. Besides, some successful applicants may relinquish the DP allocated to them and accept the places offered by NDSS secondary schools. The places allocated to these successful DP applicants will also be rendered available. Hence, some students who have not been notified may be allocated with an S1 place in schools they have applied to at the DP stage in the capacity of reserve applicants.

**(29) Q Can parents approach other preferred secondary schools and apply for admission after participating secondary schools have issued notifications to successful DP applicants?**

A Under the existing SSPA mechanism, the S1 places of schools, after deducting the repeater and DP quota, will be used for the CA. Secondary schools should not conduct any admission procedures (including the procedures of accepting applications, selecting or admitting students) to fill any possible unused places before the release of allocation results in July. This is to avoid bringing undue pressure to parents and students and create unfair situations. As such, parents need not approach other preferred secondary schools to avoid affecting schools' operation.

**(30) Q Are participating primary schools still required to submit the internal assessment results of students who have been notified as successful DP applicants for the calculation of their allocation bands?**

A Under the notification arrangements, the existing SSPA mechanism remains unchanged. Participating primary schools are still required to submit the internal assessment (IA) results at the end of Primary 5, in the middle of and at the end of P6 for all students (including those who are notified by participating secondary schools as successful DP applicants or those who are admitted by NDSS secondary schools). In the CA stage, the scaled marks of all participating students in the territory/same school net will be put into an order of merit by a computer. Then the students will be equally divided into three territory/net bands, each consisting of one-third of the total number of participating students in the territory/same school net. In other words, the number of students in each band is determined by the total number of participating students. Under the notification arrangements, the allocation bands of all participating students (including those who are notified as successful DP applicants) will be calculated based on their scaled IA results.

**(31) Q Why is the EDB going to provide each participating primary school with its respective list of successful DP applicants in early April?**

A The EDB will provide each participating primary school with its respective list of successful DP applicants in early April in order to facilitate primary schools' reminding of the parents concerned that they do not have to make school choices at the CA stage, and provide appropriate support to students not having received notification in preparation for the CA. The names of the secondary schools concerned, the order of school preference in DP applications and whether the students are selected as successful DP applicants by one or two secondary schools will not be shown on the lists.

**(32) Q Can primary or secondary schools disclose the proportion or number of students who are notified as successful DP applicants?**

A Under the notification arrangements, individual students may be selected as successful DP applicants by two participating secondary schools. They will eventually be allocated to schools of their first choice and some successful applicants may opt for studying in NDSS secondary schools. Hence, some students who have not been selected as successful DP applicants may still have the opportunity to be allocated DP in the capacity of reserve applicants. In other words, such information is not the final DP application results. Students on the Successful List for Discretionary Places of a school may not be eventually allocated to that school. In addition, whether or not students will be selected as successful applicants at the DP stage is affected by various factors, including parents' strategies for choosing schools, the number of applicants, the admission criteria and weightings, and the number of school places, etc. Hence, the proportion or number of students who receive notifications of their successful DP applications to participating secondary schools is actually not an indicator of the academic level or overall performance of the schools concerned. Primary or secondary schools are not allowed to disclose the related information/data to avoid affecting other students' strategies for choosing schools at the CA stage.

School Places Allocation Section  
Education Bureau  
September 2022

**Secondary School Places Allocation System 2021/2023**  
**(For Admission to Secondary 1 in September 2023)**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Central Allocation Mechanism**

**(1) Q What are the criteria for Central Allocation (CA)?**

A CA is based on a student's allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number. For allocation procedures of CA, parents may refer to the "Notes for Parents on Central Allocation" distributed by the Education Bureau (EDB) in mid-April 2023.

**(2) Q What is the allocation procedure for CA?**

A The Unrestricted School Choices in Part A are processed first. Only after the school choices of all students in Part A have been processed, the computer will begin to process the Restricted School Choices in Part B.

When processing the Unrestricted School Choices in Part A, the computer will first allocate school places to students in Territory Band 1 according to their order of preference of school choices. After screening the school choices of all these students, the computer will follow the same procedure to process the school choices of students in Territory Band 2 and finally those of students in Territory Band 3. Students successful in obtaining a place in Part A will not be allocated a place in Part B. If a student is not allocated a school place in Part A after all his/her school choices have been exhausted, he/she will be allocated a place in Part B.

When processing the Restricted School Choices in Part B, the computer will first allocate school places to students in Net Band 1 according to their order of preference of school choices. If a student in Net Band 1 cannot be allocated a school place even after all his/her school choices have been exhausted, the computer will allocate a place to him/her from the remaining places in the school net. Until after all the students in Net Band 1 have been allocated school places, the computer will follow the same procedure to process the choices of students in Net Band 2 and finally those of students in Net Band 3.

If parents have chosen a secondary school which eventually will not offer Secondary 1 (S1) places under the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System in this allocation cycle, that school choice will not be processed<sup>1</sup>.

**(3) Q What is the random number used for?**

A The random number is generated by the computer before running the central allocation program. It is used to determine the order of allocation of students within the same allocation band. If the demand for school places of a certain secondary school exceeds the supply, the student possessing a smaller random number within the same allocation band will be allocated a place first. The random number has no connection with the Student Reference Number or the student's personal data. During the allocation process, each student will be assigned one random number only. The random number will not be retained after the allocation procedure is completed.

---

<sup>1</sup> During the allocation procedures, the computer will omit the school choice(s) concerned and advance the subsequent school choices (if any) in the Secondary 1 Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form).

## **Choice-making Exercise in Central Allocation**

**(4) Q When will parents receive the choice-making documents for CA?**

A Parents of participating Primary 6 (P6) students of the current cycle will receive the Secondary One Choice of Schools Form (Choice Form) and the related choice-making documents through their children's primary schools in mid-April 2023. Parents must return the completed Choice Form to the EDB through their children's primary schools by early May 2023. For parents registered as SSPA e-Platform users and bound their account with "iAM Smart +"<sup>2</sup>, in addition to the paper Application Form, they may choose to submit CA application via the SSPA e-Platform. If parents have submitted paper Application Form to their child's primary school, please do not submit duplicate applications via SSPA e-Platform, and vice versa. Further details will be announced in the EDB's website and related documents in due course.

**(5) Q What should parents take note of when filling in the Choice Form?**

A Parents should consider all aspects of a school, e.g. its educational philosophy, culture, religion, class structure, development and operation, and their children's abilities, inclinations and interests so as to make a suitable school choice.

The Choice Form is divided into Part A and Part B. For Part A Unrestricted School Choices, parents may choose a maximum of three secondary schools from any school nets, including schools in their children's own net. As for Part B Restricted School Choices, parents should fill in schools from the net to which their children belong in the order of their preference and fill up the 30 choices as far as possible. If the secondary schools they have indicated in Part A are also located in their children's school net, they may include these schools in Part B. However, parents should not make repeated choices of the same school in the same part as this will not increase the chance of their children being allocated to these schools.

When parents complete Part A with the school choices, they should refer to the Handbook for Unrestricted School Choices (Handbook) distributed to primary schools in mid-April 2023. Parents may also visit the EDB's Homepage ([www.edb.gov.hk](http://www.edb.gov.hk)) (Select: Home > Education System and Policy > Primary and Secondary Education > School Places Allocation Systems > Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System) to download the lists or call the EDB's 24-hour Automatic Telephone Enquiry System on 2891 0088 (Press 2 (English) > 5 (Fax Services) > 04 (Secondary School Places Allocation System: School Lists)) to obtain the lists by fax. When parents complete Part B with the school choices, they should refer to the Secondary School Lists of the school net their children belong to. Together with the Choice Forms, the Secondary School Lists are distributed to parents in mid-April for reference.

---

<sup>2</sup> For details of the "iAM Smart+" registration, please visit the "iAM Smart" Homepage (<https://www.iamsmart.gov.hk>) (Select: Home > "iAM Smart" Registration > Registration Methods).

(6) **Q Is it necessary for parents to complete the Choice Form in the CA stage if their children received notifications from secondary schools participating in the SSPA System (participating secondary schools) as successful discretionary places (DP) applicants?**

A Whether or not students have applied for a DP of a participating secondary school (including Jockey Club Ti-I College), they must return the completed Choice Form to the EDB through the primary schools or via SSPA e-Platform by early May 2023. This is to ensure that in case they have not been successful in their application to these schools, they will still be allocated an S1 place in CA.

If the parents have been notified by the participating secondary schools of their children's inclusion in the Successful Lists for Discretionary Places or their children are admitted by Jockey Club Ti-I College, they only have to sign on the Choice Form after filling in contact information and cross out the parts on school choices to indicate that they do not have to make school choices.

If parents do not make any school choices and have not indicated their intention of not participating in CA on the Choice Form, and the students are neither allocated a school place at the DP stage, nor admitted by Jockey Club Ti-I College/Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary schools not participating in the SSPA System (NDSS secondary schools), the students will be allocated school places according to the established allocation mechanism.

## Allocation Bands

**(7) Q How are the allocation bands determined? What are they used for?**

A Students get their allocation bands according to their scaled internal assessment (IA) results. Students' IA results at the end of Primary 5, and both in mid-year and at the end of P6 will be standardised, and scaled by the average of the sampled results of the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test (Pre-S1 HKAT) 2016 and 2018 of the school. For the schools which do not have the sampled results of the Pre-S1 HKAT 2016 or 2018 (e.g. a newly participating school), the average of the sampled results of all participating primary schools in the same school net in the test in that particular year will be used for scaling.

For the allocation of school places in Part A Unrestricted School Choices of CA, the scaled marks of all students in the territory will be put into an order of merit. Then the students will be equally divided into three Territory Bands, each consisting of 1/3 of the total number of primary students in the territory. As regards allocation of school places in Part B Restricted School Choices of CA, the scaled marks of all students within the same school net will be put into an order of merit. Then the students will be equally divided into three Net Bands, each consisting of 1/3 of the total number of primary students in the school net.

While Territory Band is used to determine the order of allocation of a student for unrestricted school places in Part A of CA, Net Band is for allocation of restricted school places in Part B of CA. Allocation band is not an absolute standard for assessing P6 students' academic performance, and the allocation band of individual students will not be retained after the allocation procedure is completed.

**(8) Q If a student is approved for cross-net allocation, how is his/her Net Band determined in the new school net?**

A For a student approved for cross-net allocation, the scaled marks he/she obtained in the school in his/her original school net will be compared with the scaled marks of the students in the new school net to determine the Net Band he/she belongs to. In other words, the student's Net Band in the new school net may be different from that in his/her original school net.



## School Net

**(9) Q What is School Net? How are the secondary school nets demarcated?**

A In line with the district administration boundaries, the whole territory is divided into 18 secondary school nets for the allocation of school places as CA in Part B is done by school net. Each school net comprises all the participating primary and secondary schools physically located in the district and a number of different types of secondary schools in other districts providing school places for the net. The secondary schools and schools places from other districts may vary from year to year. According to the existing policy, except for those students whose applications for cross-net allocations are approved, in principle, the secondary school net to which a student belongs is determined by the physical location of the primary school the student attends, not the district where the student resides.

**(10) Q How are school nets arranged?**

A Provision of public sector secondary school places is planned on a territory-wide basis. Given the uneven distribution of secondary schools among school nets and demographic movement, it has been a long established practice of making netting arrangements when there is a shortage of school places in a district. Factors to be considered include the demand and supply of school places in each district, the locations of schools and the availability as well as accessibility of transportation means between school nets, and the established netting pattern, etc. We will, in consultation with the SSPA Committee (members comprising a secondary/primary school representative from each school net and representatives from major secondary and primary school councils), strike a balance between the needs of different stakeholders as far as possible in the whole process.

The number of secondary schools and school places provided from other districts may vary from year to year according to the demand and supply situation. Parents should refer to the Secondary School Lists distributed every year by the EDB for the netting arrangements for the cycle concerned.

**(11) Q Under the arrangements for notifying successful DP applicants (notification arrangements), will the number of school places shown in the related documents of CA which begins in April be updated, with the number of DP offered deducted accordingly to facilitate parents' choice of schools at the CA stage?**

A Under the notification arrangements, some students may receive notifications of their successful DP applications from two participating secondary schools and they will eventually be allocated to schools of their first choice according to the existing SSPA mechanism, leaving one school place available. Besides, some successful applicants may relinquish the DP allocated to them and accept the places offered by NDSS secondary schools. The places allocated to these successful DP applicants will also be rendered available. Under the existing SSPA mechanism, some students may be allocated with these unused DP in the capacity of reserve applicants and the remaining places will be used for the CA. The CA related documents have to be printed in March for distribution to parents for their reference in April. Hence, it is not feasible to update the number of school places concerned due to the tight schedule.

**(12) Q What is cross-net allocation?**

A The allocation of school places for Part B of CA is done by school net and the school net to which a student belongs is in principle the school net of the primary school he/she attends. If there is a genuine need, with special reasons, to change school net, parents may submit an application for cross-net allocation together with relevant proof documents to the EDB through the primary school their child is attending before early March. The primary school would forward all verified copies of application documents to the EDB for further processing. If the student is approved for cross-net allocation to the school net which his/her Hong Kong residential address (i.e. a dwelling place at which the applicant student resides and which constitutes his/her sole or main home) belongs to, he/she will participate in Part B of CA in the new school net.

**(13) Q What should parents take note of when declaring the applying student's residential address and providing relevant proof documents if they wish to apply for cross-net allocation?**

A Parents should note that the applying student's residential address should be his/her sole or chief residential address in Hong Kong, i.e. a dwelling place at which the applicant student resides and which constitutes his/her sole or main home. Acceptable Hong Kong residential address proof documents include stamped tenancy agreement, demand note for rates and/or government rent, tenancy agreement or tenant's rent card issued by the public housing authorities, residential telephone bill, and the bills from various utility companies, like Towngas, Hong Kong Electric Company Ltd., Water Supplies Department, etc. Other documents such as bank's statements and mobile phone bills will not be accepted. Besides, the name and address of the parent (i.e. the payee) must be printed on the Hong Kong residential address proof document.

**(14) Q If students have applied for DP to one or two secondary schools before they apply for cross-net allocation, and have cancelled their DP application(s) because of their cross-net application, do their parents have to fill out the Choice Form at the CA stage?**

A Under the existing SSPA mechanism, students may cancel one or both of their DP applications if they need to apply for cross-net allocation. If they have cancelled one or both of their DP applications because of their cross-net application, even if they have been notified as successful applicants under the notification arrangements, the DP concerned will automatically be cancelled. If all the DP offered by participating secondary schools have been cancelled because of cross-net application, the parents concerned will have to fill out the Choice Form so that their children can participate in the CA. If the parents concerned do not make any school choices on the Choice Form and the students concerned have not been offered a school place by any NDSS secondary schools, the students concerned will be allocated with a school place according to the established allocation mechanism.

**Secondary School Places Allocation System 2021/2023  
(For Admission to Secondary 1 in September 2023)  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**General**

**(1) Q What is Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System?**

A Eligible Primary 6 (P6) students can obtain a public sector Secondary 1 (S1) place through participating in the SSPA System. The SSPA System is divided into two stages: Discretionary Places (DP) and Central Allocation (CA).

For the DP stage, students may apply to not more than two secondary schools participating in SSPA in any districts direct. The schools can reserve not more than 30% of their S1 places as DP and admit students according to their education philosophy and characteristics.

At the CA stage, the computer allocates school places to students participating in SSPA according to their allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number.

Successful DP applicants will not be allocated places again in CA. The official results of DP and CA will be released at the same time in July 2023. For details of the SSPA System, parents may refer to the information leaflet and the video on the SSPA System.

**Feeder and Nominated Schools**

**(2) Q What are the S1 admission arrangements for a P6 student studying in a feeder/nominated school?**

A In general, after the deduction of repeater and DP, a feeder secondary school has to reserve 85% of the remaining places for its feeder primary school(s), and a nominated secondary school 25% of the remaining places for its nominated primary school(s) at the CA stage. A P6 student of a feeder/nominated school is eligible for a reserved place if he/she is in Net Band 1 or 2 and has chosen the feeder/nominated secondary school as his/her first choice in Part B Restricted School Choices. If the linked secondary school accepts Net Band 3 students, students in all 3 bands will be eligible. Parents may make enquiries to the feeder/nominated secondary school(s) direct.

If the number of eligible students exceeds the number of reserved places, the order of priority for allocation will be based on the student's Net Band and random number until all the reserved places are filled. On the other hand, all unused reserved places, if any, will be automatically used as open places for allocation.

If a P6 student of a feeder or nominated school is approved for cross-net allocation, he/she will not be eligible for a reserved place of the feeder or nominated secondary school(s).

**(3) Q How can parents know whether their children’s primary school has feeder/nominated secondary school(s)?**

A Parents may obtain the relevant information from the Primary School Profile (Profile) published in September every year. The feeder/nominated secondary school(s) of a primary school will be listed in the Profile. Parents may also contact the primary school direct for the information.

**(4) Q For a P6 student eligible for allocating to his/her feeder/nominated secondary school, does he/she need to put the feeder/nominated secondary school as one of his/her school choices in both Part A Unrestricted School Choice and Part B Restricted School Choices?**

A In the CA stage, the reserved places for feeder/nominated schools are applicable only to Part B Restricted School Choices. Parents should include the feeder/nominated secondary school as the first choice in Part B. However, whether to include the feeder/nominated secondary school in Part A is at parents’ own discretion.

**(5) Q Will an eligible student of a feeder/nominated primary school not be allocated to his/her feeder/nominated secondary school?**

A A student may not be allocated to his/her feeder/nominated secondary school for the following reasons:

- (a) The student has not made the feeder/nominated secondary school as his/her first school choice in Part B Restricted School Choices as required;
- (b) The eligible feeder/nominated P6 students outnumber the reserved places of the school;
- (c) The student has successfully obtained a discretionary place in another secondary school or has been allocated a school place in Part A Unrestricted School Choices; or
- (d) The student has been approved for cross-net allocation.

### **“Through-train” Schools**

**(6) Q What are the S1 admission arrangements for a P6 student studying in a “through-train” school?**

A A P6 student of a “through-train” school may choose to proceed to its linked secondary school direct. If the student applies for DP of participating secondary schools or S1 place(s) of Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary schools not participating in the Secondary School Places Allocation System (NDSS secondary schools) (no matter successful or not), or participates in CA, he/she will not be allowed to retain the right to proceed direct to the linked secondary school.

**(7) Q Do students of other primary schools have a chance to study in a “through-train” secondary school?**

A All “through-train” schools are required to comply with the principle that the number of S1 places in a linked secondary school must exceed the number of P6 graduates in its linked primary school so that students of other primary schools can still be admitted through applying for DP or participating in CA. “Through-train” secondary schools, both existing and newly-operated, should in principle reserve not less than 15% of their total number of S1 places, after the deduction of repeater places, for admitting students of other primary schools through DP application or CA.

### **Direct Subsidy Scheme Secondary Schools**

**(8) Q What should parents take note of if they wish to send their children to a Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) secondary school?**

A Parents should note that DSS secondary schools may be fee charging. Students may be promoted to Secondary 4 (S4) in their own DSS secondary schools upon completion of Secondary 3 and will not be centrally placed to S4 in other schools subvented by the Education Bureau (EDB).

**(9) Q For the participating DSS secondary schools, what are the differences in the allocation arrangements as compared with government, aided and caput secondary schools?**

A For the participating DSS secondary schools, their allocation arrangements are basically the same as the government, aided and caput secondary schools except that participating DSS secondary schools may reserve more than 30% of their S1 places as DP and the S1 places of participating DSS secondary schools are allocated on a “no-choice no-allocation” principle in Part B Restricted School Choices of CA, i.e. students will not be allocated to a participating DSS secondary school unless they have included the school as one of the choices in Part B of CA.

**(10) Q What is the admission procedure for the NDSS secondary schools?**

A For the NDSS secondary schools, they can admit students according to their own procedures and schedules and will not be allocated students through the SSPA System. There is no limit to the number of NDSS secondary schools that students may apply to, and admission is based on the criteria set by the schools. NDSS secondary schools are required to submit their Successful Lists of Participating Students to the EDB by early May. Students included in the Successful Lists of Participating Students of NDSS secondary schools will not be allocated with S1 places of participating secondary schools, including those having selected them as successful DP applicants.

## Non-Chinese Speaking Students

**(11) Q Under the SSPA System, what are the allocation arrangements for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students?**

A All eligible students, irrespective of their races or places of birth, enjoy equal opportunities for admission to public sector schools under the SSPA System, which is fair and transparent. In other words, all eligible students (including NCS students) will be allocated an S1 place according to the same mechanism. NCS students can apply to any two participating secondary schools at the DP stage. For choice-making at the CA stage, they can also choose a maximum of three secondary schools from any school nets in Part A and a maximum of 30 secondary schools in their own school nets in Part B according to their preferences.

**(12) Q Under the existing allocation arrangement, how should NCS students make school choices?**

A Parents of NCS students should consider all aspects of a school, e.g. its educational philosophy, culture, religion, class structure, development and operation, and their children's abilities, inclinations and interests so as to make a suitable school choice. Parents may seek advice from the primary schools that their children are attending, and visit the school's homepage for the latest developments of the school. To assist parents of NCS students in choosing public sector schools, the EDB has made available information on admission to schools in major languages of diverse races. Besides, dedicated briefing sessions with simultaneous interpretation services are held annually for parents of NCS students.

To provide parents with more comprehensive information about making school choices, starting from the 2015/16 school year, the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) has published the English printed version of the Secondary School Profiles for distribution to parents of NCS students studying at P6 via primary schools.

Starting from the 2018/19 school year, a separate column on "Education Support for NCS Students" has been added to the Secondary School Profiles for schools to provide information on their support for NCS students. All public sector secondary schools and Direct Subsidy Scheme secondary schools which admit NCS students and are provided with additional funding are required to specify under this column the additional support measures for enhancing NCS students' learning of Chinese and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools. The Secondary School Profiles are uploaded to the Chinese and English versions of the CHSC webpage.

Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has further enhanced the newly added column by requiring the schools concerned to provide more information on the relevant support measures. EDB encourages schools to continue enriching the contents of the Chinese and English versions of the Secondary School Profiles and school webpages.

**(13) Q What are the support measures for NCS students provided by the EDB to facilitate their learning of Chinese?**

A The Government is committed to encouraging and supporting the integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the EDB has implemented a series of enhanced support measures which include the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) in primary and secondary schools, the substantial increase of the additional funding to schools, and the provision of learning and teaching resources, teacher training and professional support to schools, etc. to facilitate schools’ support for NCS students’ learning of Chinese, and the creation of an inclusive learning environment.

For details of the support measures, please visit [EDB webpage](#).

School Places Allocation Section  
Education Bureau  
September 2022