

(Translation)

**Minutes of the First Meeting of the
Social Welfare Committee (2024) of the
Kwai Tsing District Council**

Date: 20 February 2024

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 3:18 p.m.

Venue: Kwai Tsing District Office (“K&T DO”) Conference Room

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of Arrival</u>	<u>Time of Departure</u>
Miss CHU Lai-ling, MH (Chairman)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms CHAN On-ni (Vice Chairman)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms WANG Chung-wing	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr NG Yam-fung Benny	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LEE Wai-lok	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr CHOW Kim-ho	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Miss CHAU Kit-ying	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LAM Ying-wai	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LAM Chui-ling, MH, JP	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr TSUI Hiu-kit	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LEUNG Kar-ming, MH	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Miss MOK Yee-ki	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms GUO Huimin	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms Miranda CHAN Oi-yi	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr PANG Yap-ming	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr AU Chi-fai	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms CHENG Lam	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Miss LO Yuen-ting, MH	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting

In Attendance

Mr TANG Huggin, JP	District Officer (Kwai Tsing)
Ms YUEN Mo-kuen, Monita	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing) ³ , Social Welfare Department
Mr LAM Ka-yan, Leo	Social Work Officer 2, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing Planning and Coordinating Team, Social Welfare Department

Ms LIN Shui-ngor, Miranda	Senior School Development Officer (Kwai Tsing)3, Education Bureau
Dr Desmond NGUYEN	Hospital Chief Executive, Kwai Chung Hospital, Hospital Authority
Mr TSANG Kin-hang, Gary	Labour Officer (Workplace Consultation Promotion)2, Labour Department
Miss LEUNG Man-sin, Kammy (Secretary)	Executive Assistant (Kwai Tsing) District Council (5), Kwai Tsing District Office

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives of government departments to the first meeting of the Social Welfare Committee (“SWC”) (2024) of the Kwai Tsing District Council (“K&T DC”).

Discussion Items

The Status of the “School-based After School Care Service Pilot Scheme” in Kwai Tsing District

(Proposed by Miss CHU Lai-ling, MH, Ms LAM Chui-ling, MH, JP, Mr CHOW Kim-ho, Ms LAM Ying-wai, Ms LEUNG Kar-ming, MH, Miss LO Yuen-ting, MH and Mr NG Yam-fung Benny)

(SWC Paper Nos. 1/D/2024 and 1a/D/2024)

2. SWC discussed the aforesaid matter, and put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) Believed that the “School-based After School Care Service Pilot Scheme” (“Pilot Scheme”) is similar to the “School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes” of the Education Bureau (“EDB”) in terms of its content, activity nature, and target beneficiaries. As the target groups of both programmes are low-income families, an enquiry was made to the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) or EDB on whether they would consider integrating the two programmes to utilise resources more effectively.
- (ii) Understood that the Pilot Scheme aims to release the potential labour force by providing after-school care service, and the target participants include the

families receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (“CSSA”). Therefore, an enquiry was made to SWD on whether it had monitored the employment status of parents participating in the Pilot Scheme.

- (iii) Enquired whether the Department had developed key performance indicators or conducted a questionnaire survey among students or parents participating in the Pilot Scheme to carry out more specific reviews and assessments on the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme. An enquiry was also made on whether assessment on the effectiveness in releasing greater labour force and benefiting the students would be conducted prior to the end of the Pilot Scheme, thereby allowing Members to keep track of the implementation progress of the Pilot Scheme.
- (iv) Many schools had reported students remaining on campuses after school brought about challenges to school operation to a certain extent, e.g. the need to handle behavioural problems of students after finishing classes. In this regard, the schools had to take separate steps to carry out follow-ups, or to arrange teaching staff to conduct daily after-school patrols. It was noticed that the list of participating schools in SWD’s reply document did not include all the schools in Kwai Tsing District. Therefore, Members would like to learn about the concerns or difficulties of the schools that had yet to participate in the Pilot Scheme. For example, whether such schools had sufficient venues and manpower, and whether the non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”) joining as service operators could provide sufficient human resources for on-campus services. Enquiries were also made on whether the Department would provide the schools with resources for implementing the scheme, and whether the schools had set any qualification requirements for hiring tutors to look after the students.
- (v) Supported the Pilot Scheme and believed that it could provide support for needy families in the district.
- (vi) Many schools in Kwai Tsing District had been found to participate in the Pilot Scheme. Therefore, an enquiry was made on whether the Department would roll out a second round of the Pilot Scheme to recruit schools to participate again.

3. Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)³, SWD, responded as follows:

- (i) The Government has been implementing the Pilot Scheme since 2023/24 school year, allowing primary school students in need to stay at school outside school hours for care and learning support. The Pilot Scheme will be reviewed after one year of implementation. During the pilot period, about 50 primary schools in the districts with greater number of targeted students (including Kwai Tsing District) will be implementing the scheme in which 3 000 students were estimated to receive benefits from such a scheme. As of 31 January 2024, a total of 12 primary schools and 7 service operators in Kwai Tsing District participated in the Pilot Scheme. They have started introducing the service progressively from September 2023, providing a total of about 480 service places. As of 30 November 2023, approximately 330 students participated as beneficiaries in Kwai Tsing District, where each of the schools had an average of about 30 students participated in the Pilot Scheme. EDB is responsible for recruiting schools to participate in the Pilot Scheme, and interested schools can apply for participation on their own. SWD is responsible for recruiting service units from recognised service providers and matching them with the participating schools. As the participating schools had introduced the services at different times, relevant recruitment and application vetting procedures were still in progress.
- (ii) In addition to schoolwork tutoring, various student activities, such as handicrafts, ball games and group games, are provided under the Pilot Scheme to cultivate the interests, enhance the social skills and relieve the study pressure of students. In terms of provision of parental guidance and education, the service operators regularly hold parenting talks, parents sharing sessions, parent-child activities, workshops, etc. for parents to register and join as needed. Recognised service providers are required to possess relevant experience in operating after-school care services. However, the Department did not keep the information on the employment status of parents after participating in the Pilot Scheme, nor the effectiveness of the scheme in providing after-school care service to students.
- (iii) The aims of the “School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes” and the Pilot Scheme are not entirely the same. The former

aims to help students improve their learning effectiveness, while the latter mainly provides care and learning support services.

- (iv) Regarding the service targets of the Pilot Scheme, the parents or guardians of the student beneficiaries can enjoy the service at no cost if they are unable to look after the students outside school hours due to work, job seeking or other special familial factors, in addition to meeting the income criterion. Eligible families are required to submit applications, together with the documents required, to recognised service providers for vetting.
- (v) Under the Pilot Scheme, while venues are mainly provided by schools, funding is channelled through the Community Care Fund and the service is provided by NGOs. The service is run after school until 6:00 p.m. from Mondays to Fridays and can be extended to 7:00 p.m. if school circumstances permit. A total of 6 hours of service per day is provided on Saturdays and Sundays. In the cases of school holidays and class suspensions whilst service venues cannot be provided by the schools, the NGOs should make arrangements for service provision through their service units within the same district as far as practicable. For other support matters, responsible NGOs can liaise with the schools concerned.

4. Senior School Development Officer (Kwai Tsing)³, EDB, responded as follows:

- (i) Regarding the “School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes”, schools can make use of “School-based Grant” to organise after-school learning activities for needy students.
- (ii) As the schools participating in the scheme are required to provide service venues, they also have to take into consideration the venues and manpower arrangements for other after-school activities.

Concern over the Issue of Student Suicides and Enquiry into the Efficacy of Implementing the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism

(Proposed by Ms WANG Chung-wing, Ms Miranda CHAN Oi-yi, Mr TSUI Hiu-kit, Miss MOK Yee-ki, Ms GUO Huimin, Mr NG Yam-fung Benny, Miss LO Yuen-ting, MH, Ms LAM Ying-wai and Ms CHENG Lam)

(SWC Paper Nos. 2/D/2024, 2a/D/2024, 2b/D/2024 and 2c/D/2024)

5. SWC discussed the aforesaid matter, and put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) Pointed out that according to the data released by the Department of Health, in 2022-23 school year, about 233 000 primary school students and about 97 000 secondary school students had been referred to Special Assessment Centres (“SACs”) due to the psychological and behavioural problems found in the students’ annual health assessments. The percentage of all primary and secondary school students taking the assessments who had to be referred to SACs in this school year increased by 1.8% as compared to that of the previous school year. In the past 12 months, 2.8% of the students surveyed in a questionnaire indicated that they had contemplated suicides, and 1.3% of the students surveyed indicated that they had attempted suicides. In view of that, Members enquired about the efficacy of the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism (“Emergency Mechanism”) and whether the Department(s) had evaluated and followed up the psychological problems of students attempted to commit suicide after the introduction of the Emergency Mechanism. Members believed that the statistics on youth suicides and attempted suicides were important indicators for measuring and evaluating the work efficacy, and therefore hoped that the Department(s) could provide relevant data after the meeting. The Department(s) should review the mechanism if the rate of student suicides did not drop.
- (ii) As the first-tier of the Emergency Mechanism relies on schools’ professional teams, which comprised teachers and social workers, to identify students with higher suicidal risks, an enquiry was made on whether school-based social workers identified students’ psychological or behavioural problems by proactively approaching the students, or by receiving help requests from them. However, students at upper primary level and secondary school students in their adolescence are less willing to confide to or share their thoughts with others, but are more willing to talk to their friends. Therefore, EDB was recommended to consider encouraging students to pay more attention to the psychological and mental health of their classmates and friends around them.
- (iii) Enquired whether the Emergency Mechanism will continue to be implemented after 31 December this year.

6. Hospital Chief Executive, Kwai Chung Hospital, Hospital Authority, responded as follows:

- (i) Said that the Hospital Authority (“HA”) is responsible for the third-tier work of the Emergency Mechanism and provides a telephone consultation hotline for schools. A total of 57 relevant phone enquiries had been received in the period from December in the previous year to 28 January this year, during which most enquiries were made for the information on mental health services. There were also cases in which school staff members had accompanied students to accident and emergency departments for treatments after seeking advice from psychiatric specialists.
- (ii) Pointed out that the Kwai Chung Hospital Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic also received case referrals from school principals after the implementation of the Emergency Mechanism.

[Post-meeting note: After triage and screening, Kwai Chung Hospital accords priority to urgent cases and provides follow-up services to relevant outpatient cases according to the targets set by psychiatric specialist outpatient (“SOP”) clinics for the median waiting times of new cases (i.e. the median waiting time for Priority 1 or urgent new cases should be less than one week, whilst that for Priority 2 or semi-urgent new cases should be less than four weeks). In the past 12 months, the overall median waiting times of new appointments for Priority 1 (i.e. urgent) cases and Priority 2 (i.e. semi-urgent) cases at psychiatric SOP clinics of HA were less than one week and four weeks respectively. HA will continue to ensure the targets are met.]

- (iii) Said that in addition to providing hotline and clinical services, Kwai Chung Hospital is also committed to organising various activities in the community to promote the mental health of children and adolescents, including:
 - Kwai Chung Hospital has jointly organised Health-in-Mind (“HIM”) Programme with MINDSET to disseminate information about mental health to students, teaching staff, school social workers, family members of students and the public, as well as to enhance their concern for students’ mental health;

- Organised mental health first aid courses for the caregivers of hospital service users and student volunteers in the hospital.
- The Kowloon West Service Team of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Community Support Project (“CAMCom”) is comprised of child and adolescent psychiatrists, nurses, clinical psychologists and senior social workers from Kwai Chung Hospital. The team is committed to carrying out various educational and community support activities for proactively addressing the anxiety and depression issues of children and adolescents. Besides, the team also visits participating schools for early identification of children and adolescents suffering from anxiety and depression, as well as for early provision of assistance to relieve the emotional distress of children and adolescents and prevention of their problems from being aggravated. For more serious cases, the team would recommend schools to refer their students to psychiatric clinics for follow-ups. During the pandemic, members of the team not only provided services in person at school, but also offered services online.
- Kwai Chung Hospital has collaborated with various community partners to organise different activities. For example, it arranged for students to work as volunteers in the hospital during summer vacations, hence providing them with opportunities to interact with hospital service users to increase mental health knowledge and positive mindset development. By organising the aforesaid activities, Kwai Chung Hospital disseminated mental health knowledge to other departments, institutions and members of the local community (such as the Police and Care Teams), as well as promoted its volunteer services to strengthen support for community mental health services, deepen local residents’ understanding of mental health and improve their ability to withstand pressure, and identify those in need at an earlier stage.

7. Senior School Development Officer (Kwai Tsing)³, EDB, responded as follows:

- (i) EDB has been requesting primary and secondary schools to report cases of suspected student suicides to help the Bureau understand the situation better and provide professional support to the schools concerned appropriately. In 2023, there was a total of 32 suspected student suicide cases reported by

primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong to EDB. The nature and number of suicide cases can only be determined after completion of the proceedings at the Coroner's Court. In addition, as EDB had not collected relevant data from the Coroner's Court, it was unable to provide officially verified number of student suicide cases. EDB had not collected from schools, or kept statistics, on students attempting suicide or experiencing emotional and mental distress, nor had it compiled relevant statistics by districts.

- (ii) Under the Three-Tier School-based Emergency Mechanism, schools accord priority to students with higher suicidal risk and provide them with care and counselling services through first-tier interdisciplinary teams so that such students are offered with timely assistance, as well as help in seeking professional counselling or treatment services. EDB did not collect statistics from schools on students seeking help for emotional and mental distress. If schools are short of manpower, the Bureau will assist in referring such cases to the "off-campus support network team" coordinated by SWD in the second-tier. As of 6 February 2024, EDB had received 59 cases of schools seeking "off-campus support" and had referred the students concerned to SWD's "off-campus support network team" for follow-ups. For the third-tier, school principals can refer students with severe mental health needs to the psychiatric services of HA.
- (iii) To enhance professional competence in supporting students with mental health needs, EDB has all along been committed to providing teachers with professional development courses, which included holding a 60-hour thematic course on "Focusing on Students with Mental Illness" for teachers and organising "gatekeeper" training to invite educational psychologists to share with teachers the information about students' suicidal behaviours and relevant warning signs, thereby making it easier for teachers to identify students with greater suicidal risk.
- (iv) The "gatekeeper" training under the "Peer Power - Student Gatekeeper Training Programme" of EDB aims to train students to become Peer Leaders, boost their knowledge of mental health and skills in managing their stress and emotions, equip them to identify and dealing with peers with mental health needs, and promote cultures of facing problems positively and help-seeking

in schools. In November 2023, EDB launched the Mental Health Literacy Resource Package for students at upper primary school level, and will launch resource packages for students at different learning stages by phases, so as to strengthen students' understanding of mental health. To enhance the psychological resilience of primary school pupils, EDB also produced a picture book titled "The Three Chocolate Challenges" and uploaded it to the "Mental Health@School" website, so as to help teachers and parents cultivate students' "growth mindset".

- (v) For parents, EDB organises "gatekeeper" training from time to time for parents to strengthen their support to children's mental health needs. Besides, to support parents in taking care of students' mental health, EDB had provided additional "One-off Grant for Mental Health of Parents and Students" to the parent-teacher associations of all publicly-funded primary and secondary schools (including special schools). EDB encouraged schools to collaborate with Parent-Teacher Associations in utilising the grant to organise parent education activities in support of students' mental health development and in building positive cultures at home.

8. Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)³, SWD, responded as follows:

- (i) In the second-tier of the Emergency Mechanism, SWD commissioned 5 NGOs from the territory to form "off-campus support network team" to support schools lacking manpower. Upon receiving referrals, the "off-campus support network team" will get in contact with the students concerned as soon as possible and arrange follow-up services, including emergency intervention services covering assessments, support and counselling in individual, group or online format. The team will also refer the students to other service units such as the Integrated Family Services Centres, the Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness and the Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres according to their individual needs. Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing Districts are part of New Territories West where relevant support is provided by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups. According to the data provided by EDB, as of 6 February 2024, the Bureau received a total of 59 cases of schools seeking "off-campus support", and the students concerned were referred to SWD's "off-campus

support network team” for follow-ups. The Department did not keep any statistics on the cases of youth suicides and attempted suicides.

- (ii) In addition to providing individual counselling, school social workers also organise various groups or activities in schools to identify students in need and provide them with appropriate support and follow-ups through relevant activities and services.
- (iii) The Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing District Social Welfare Office of SWD is committed to coordinating and communicating proactively with social welfare service units and stakeholders in the districts to take forward welfare service work plans in a collaborative manner through consolidating local community efforts as well as fostering cross-sectoral and cross-service co-operation, so as to address the welfare needs of the districts. Among the plans concerned, “Project A.I. – Accommodation · Inclusion” programme has been implemented by SWD for several years to render multi-pronged support to the psychological and developmental needs of school-attending children and adolescents, both within and outside schools. That programme has been expanded to cover primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary institutions, in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts this year. There are currently 7 primary schools and 7 secondary schools participating in the programme in Kwai Tsing District. The services of the programme include enhancement of students’ social skills, support to students with special learning needs, and promotion of mental health. In the work plans for the following year, SWD will take into consideration Members’ opinions, including drawing greater attention from stakeholders in the district to the mental health of the youth.

Any Other Business

- 9. There was no other business.

Date of Next Meeting

- 10. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 16 April 2024 (Tuesday).

Kwai Tsing District Council Secretariat
April 2024