

2023 District Council Ordinary Election – Arrangements for Near Boundary Polling Stations (with photos)

The Government today (November 7) announced details of the setting up of Near Boundary Polling Stations (NBPSs) for the 2023 District Council Ordinary Election (DCOE).

The 2023 DCOE, to be held on December 10, 2023, is the first large-scale territory-wide election after improving the district governance system and reforming the District Councils (DCs). The successful organisation of the election is of great significance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) as well as to the Hong Kong community. As such, the HKSAR Government attaches great importance to the various arrangements for the election and is committed to ensuring that the election will be fair, just and honest, as well as safe, orderly, efficient and user-friendly.

The Government has received many views and voices from the community that many Hong Kong residents are currently working and living on the Mainland, and that they very much hope to support this DC election and fulfil their civic responsibility by voting. Therefore, they hope that the Government can facilitate the setting up of polling stations at the boundary control points so that they can return to the Mainland to attend to their business quickly after voting in Hong Kong. However, in view of the fact that the epidemic has now passed and the control points have resumed normal operations, and that all the control points are currently very busy in operation, and hence there is not adequate space to set up polling stations. Therefore, the Government has made a special arrangement for this DC election by setting up NBPSs at two schools near the Sheung Shui MTR station, namely Hong Kong Taoist Association Tang Hin Memorial Secondary School and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Kap Yan Directors' College, to facilitate the electors living on the Mainland to return to Hong Kong to cast their votes (the Arrangement).

Arrangement for registration

To ensure the orderly implementation of the Arrangement, all electors participating in the Arrangement must be preregistered. The Arrangement is applicable to any elector who is registered for the 2023 DCOE District Council geographical constituency (DCGC). If a registrant wishes to confirm his/her eligibility, he/she may log in to the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (www.vr.gov.hk/eng/home.html) to ascertain whether he/she is registered as an elector. Successful registrants will be allocated to vote at the NBPSs set up in the two schools mentioned above (electors for the Hong Kong Island and Kowloon DCGCs will be allocated to vote at Hong Kong Taoist Association Tang Hin Memorial Secondary School, and electors for the New

Territories DCGCs will be allocated to vote at Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Kap Yan Directors' College).

The Arrangement is only applicable to DCGC electors but not District Committees constituency (DCC) electors. For DCC electors, the Electoral Affairs Commission has arranged for them to cast their votes at the 18 DCC polling stations so as to ensure the smooth conduct of the polling and counting procedures. Thus, there will not be any polling arrangements for DCCs in the NBPSs. DCC electors on the Mainland should plan their return trips to Hong Kong as early as possible so that they can cast their votes in Hong Kong on the polling day.

Quota

To ensure the smooth and orderly implementation of the Arrangement, a preregistration system will be adopted with a quota limit. The maximum number of the registration quota for the NBPSs will be 38 000, and the quota will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Depending on the actual registration situation at the time, the Government will exercise discretion to consider suitably increasing the quota if the turnout is very high.

Registration arrangements

(a) Online registration

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) will set up a dedicated online registration system (www.reo-form.gov.hk/nbps.htm) for the Arrangement. The system will commence operation at 9am on November 20, 2023. Electors who wish to participate in the Arrangement could preregister through the dedicated online registration system.

The registration period will be from November 20, 2023, at 9am to December 5, 2023, at 6pm. Once confirmed, the electors concerned should cast their votes on the polling day at the assigned NPBSs. When making registration through the online registration system, electors should also choose to vote at a specified timeslot (per hour) on the polling day, so as to facilitate relevant departments to make corresponding arrangements and manage the flow of people. In case registrants have to change their itineraries on the polling day, they can simply cancel the registration and change back to their originally allocated polling stations for casting their votes through the online registration system during the registration period. However, if the registration period has already expired when the change of itinerary is made, the electors concerned may contact the REO (Tel: 2891 1001) directly to make appropriate arrangements.

(b) Information required for registration

When registering, electors are required to provide their names in both Chinese and English, Hong Kong identity card (HKID) number, email address and contact telephone number (including a telephone number in the HKSAR or the Mainland which can receive SMS).

(c) Confirmation of registration

After submitting the registration application, the REO will send a notification of registration result to the electors concerned via SMS and email instantly to confirm whether they have been successfully registered to vote at the NBPSs. Only upon receipt of the notification of registration result confirming their successful registration, electors can cast their votes at the relevant polling stations.

Documents to bring on polling day

On the polling day, registered electors are required to bring and present their HKID cards or other recognised proof of identity to verify their identity for voting.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government emphasised, "The 2023 DCOE will return 88 DCGC members and 176 DCC members. The Government will ensure that the election will be conducted in a fair, just, clean, safe and orderly manner. Under the new District Council election system, we believe that the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" will be fully realised, and the new term of the District Council will be able to restore the original positioning of the Basic Law and enhance the effectiveness of district governance so as to benefit the well-being of every member of the public in the districts. Therefore, the Government strongly appeals to all voters in Hong Kong to vote enthusiastically in this important election which is of great significance to Hong Kong, and to elect District Council members of their choice to work together to build a better community for Hong Kong."

For details of the Arrangement, please visit the dedicated election website (www.elections.gov.hk/dc2023/eng/index.html). For enquiries, please email to reoeng@reo.gov.hk or call the REO hotline (2891 1001). The hotline service hours run from 8.45am to 6pm from Monday to Friday.