

CS learns about implementation of School-based After School Care Service Scheme (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, visited SKH St Andrew's Primary School in Sham Shui Po this afternoon (December 7) to learn more about the implementation of the School-based After School Care Service Scheme. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, and the Acting Secretary for Education, Mr Sze Chun-fai, also joined the visit.

Mr Chan first received a briefing by the Principal of the school, Mr Tam Hsien-ming, on the needs of students participating in the Scheme, including those with special educational needs and those from single-parent families, followed by an introduction by the Chief Executive Officer of the operator, St James' Settlement, Ms Josephine Lee, on the services provided so far in the current school year. Mr Chan took a close look at students doing homework and revisions in the classroom under the guidance of instructors. He also chatted with students and parents, and was glad to note that some of the parents had rejoined the labour market in two months. Mr Chan and other officials then played with students in group games in the hall and encouraged them to enhance their social skills and relieve academic stress through the activities.

Mr Chan said, "The current-term Government has adopted the strategy of targeted poverty alleviation by directing resources to those most in need. The Government, in co-operation with the Commission on Poverty chaired by me, has identified single-parent households as one of the target groups upon review. The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address sets out the launch of the School-based After School Care Service Scheme in the 2023/24 school year to provide targeted support for underprivileged families, especially single-parent families.

"I am happy to see that students enrolled in the Scheme can finish homework and revision, as well as engage in games and extra-curricular activities with classmates at school to improve their physical and mental health, and that parents can alleviate their stress of looking after their children so that they can find full-time jobs or part-time ones of a longer duration to improve their living. The Scheme can also help attract more women to rejoin the labour force to further boost productivity in society."

The Scheme is implemented in primary schools from those districts with more targeted students, including Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long, and is expected to benefit 3 000 students. Under the Scheme, venues are provided by schools with funding from the Community Care Fund while NGOs operate the service. The service is run after school until 6pm from Monday to Friday and may be extended to 7pm if school situations permit. A total of six hours of service per day should be provided on Saturday and Sunday. In case of school holidays and class

suspensions where the campus cannot be opened, NGOs should provide their service in service units in the same district as far as practicable.

