

[EDB to provide Top-up Grant for Supporting Online Learning of Financially Needy Students to schools](#)

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (November 10) issued a circular memorandum to all government schools, aided schools (including special schools) and caput schools as well as schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme informing them of the details of the one-off Top-up Grant for Supporting Online Learning of Financially Needy Students.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The Government has been disbursing Internet access subsidies (IAS) via the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency and the Social Welfare Department to eligible families to support needy students to acquire basic Internet services in the market. Due to the volatile developments of the COVID-19 epidemic, different extents of blended modes of learning, i.e. face-to-face classes, e-learning at home or other modes of learning, may become the new normal in teaching and learning. In view of some students being unable to acquire appropriate Internet services due to their living environments, the EDB will disburse a one-off top-up grant to subsidise schools for the additional expenses incurred in purchasing portable Wi-Fi routers (Wi-Fi eggs) and/or mobile data cards to strengthen the support for financially needy primary and secondary students for use in e-learning at home under the new normal. The beneficiaries are students who do not have access to appropriate Internet services (e.g. through fixed broadband services), covering students receiving subsidies under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme or the School Textbook Assistance Scheme and those with limited economic means identified by schools."

The spokesman said applying schools should remind parents who are receiving IAS and living in places without access to appropriate Internet services that the IAS could be used to acquire portable Wi-Fi routers and/or mobile data cards first for e-learning at home for their children. The full rate of IAS in the 2020/21 school year has been increased to \$1,600 per household. In case the IAS cannot fully meet the needs, schools may also provide additional support through the top-up grant.

Schools in need may make their applications to the EDB. The amount of the top-up grant for an individual school will be calculated based on the unit rate of \$800 multiplied by the number of beneficiary students plus an additional 10 per cent for contingency funding. The grant is expected to be disbursed to applying schools in December this year. Schools can deploy the top-up grant to purchase and lend portable Wi-Fi routers and/or provide mobile data cards to the students for use in e-learning at home. Details can be found in the relevant circular memorandum and the EDB webpage.

Regarding computer equipment, the EDB has been implementing an

assistance programme through the Community Care Fund to subsidise needy primary and secondary students for purchasing mobile computer devices since the 2018/19 school year. The programme has benefited about 34 000 students in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school years. In the 2020/21 school year, about 800 schools have joined the programme so far, and it is estimated that around 100 000 students will benefit.